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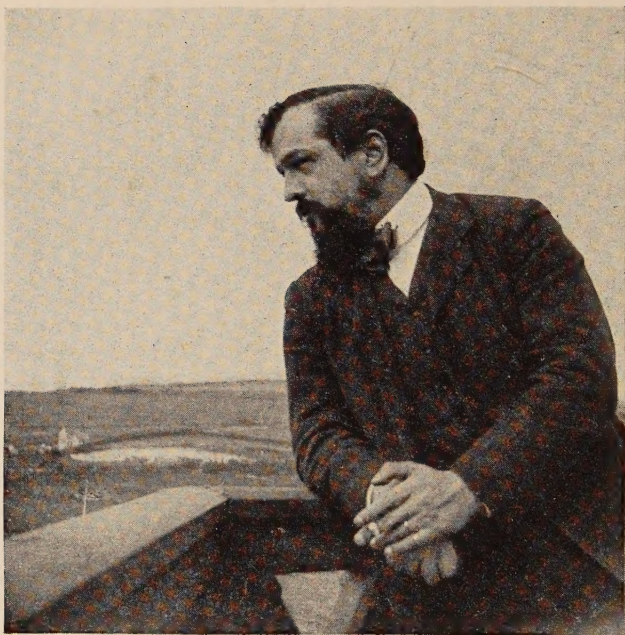
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MONSIEUR CROCHE

THE DILETTANTE HATER





CLAUDE DEBUSSY

1904

MONSIEUR CROCHE

THE DILETTANTE HATER

From the French of

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

With a Foreword by

LAWRENCE GILMAN



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FOREWORD

ODDLY enough, there exists in English no Life of Debussy;* nor even any exhaustive study of his art, though Debussy has been dead for ten years. The student of his music, unless he reads French and happens to possess a copy of Monsieur Louis Laloy's admirable book, published nineteen years ago at Paris and long out of print, will find it difficult to learn much about the details of Debussy's too brief existence, or about his ideas or his æsthetic history.

The present collection of brief essays in musical criticism, gleaned from Debussy's journalistic writings, will therefore, one fancies, be welcomed by all those for whom every bit of intellectual documentation concerning a genius is of value, or at least of interest.

Debussy contributed articles on music to various Paris journals between 1901 and the first year of the War, although most of his critical

* The sketch by Mrs. Franz Liebich was published eleven years before Debussy's death.

activity fell within the years 1901-1903. From April to December, 1901, he wrote for *La Revue Blanche*. From January to July, 1903, he contributed to *Gil Blas*. In October, 1902, and May, 1903, he wrote two articles for *Musica*; and in January, 1903, he published an article in the *Mercure de France*. In 1904 he wrote twice, and in 1906, once, for *La Revue Bleue*. In 1908 and 1909, he wrote two articles for *Figaro*; and between 1908 and 1910 he contributed occasionally to *Comœdia* and the *Paris-Journal*. During the music seasons of 1912-13 and 1913-14, he reviewed concerts for S. I. M.*

Debussy made extracts from his articles for publication in book form, and he was able to correct the proofs; but "the city in which the book was to have been printed" became a part of the occupied territory during the War, and the volume was not published until both Debussy and the War had passed into history. Debussy died in 1918. The book was issued in 1921 under the title *Monsieur Croche, Anti-Dilettante*, with

* Those who are interested in the subjects and the precise dates of publication of Debussy's critical essays, will find them listed in Monsieur G. Jean-Aubry's *La Musique et les Nations* (Paris and London, 1922).

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the double imprint of the Librairie Dorbon aîné and the Nouvelle Revue Française. That publication was in the form of an expensive limited edition. The book was re-issued in 1927 by the Librairie Gallimard, and it was from this later edition that the present English version was prepared.

It has been said that when most of these little essays in criticism were written by Debussy, he was "young, unsuccessful, and bitter." He was, perhaps, relatively speaking, "unsuccessful"—though by 1903 his *Pelléas et Mélisande* had made him famous, if not rich. To judge by these essays, he does not seem to have been especially bitter. Whether he was "young" or not is a matter of definition. He was born in 1862; therefore, when he wrote for *La Revue Blanche* he was thirty-nine, and when he wrote for *Gil Blas* he was in the sunnier forties. Since music critics live almost as long as tortoises, we may regard the journalistic Debussy as "young," if we choose. It is more important to remember that in 1903, when he was writing regularly for *Gil Blas*, Debussy the composer had turned out many of his more consequential works—for orchestra, his *Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune*

and the *Nocturnes*; for the stage, *Pelléas et Mélisande*; his string quartet was ten years behind him; and he had written the best of his songs. (The most characteristic of the piano works came after, rather than before, 1903.)

It was while he was on the staff of *La Revue Blanche* that Debussy invented as a useful lay figure the imaginary character of "Monsieur Croche," who for a time served him as mouth-piece. This critical *alter ego* was introduced to Debussy's readers in the issue of *La Revue Blanche* for July 1, 1901. In the book, he does not figure very conspicuously. We meet him in the course of the opening pages; but the masquerade seems rather a half-hearted one, and before long it is quite unmistakably Debussy himself who is talking to us.

What we learn of Monsieur Croche informs us that, as Emil Vuillermoz pointed out, he "is not the traditional contradictor, the devil's advocate, who pretends to be a professor of æsthetics and prepares facile victories for himself. He does not attempt to sustain false theories, finally permitting the author to refute them with virtuosity. The manner of Debussy does not accommodate itself to such dialectics. Monsieur Croche is rather

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a second Debussy—a bitter and sarcastic Debussy, intentionally paradoxical, who dares say what he likes. He is affectionate caricature. Debussy makes of him a Hoffmannesque marionette, puts into his mouth some ferocities, as though he were an *enfant terrible*, who dares say out loud what his well-bred father contents himself with murmuring in secret. Monseieur Croche was the safety valve which guaranteed against danger of inelegant explosion a mind in which at times the pressure of irritation mounted too high. Debussy had sworn not to permit himself to lose his temper, not to fall into romantic wrath, to remain faithful to his malicious half-smile in the presence of men and things. He held himself to his promise, but it is always permitted—is it not?—to provide one's self with a familiar, who utters with pleasure the violent phrases which scruple forbids."

Monsieur Croche announced himself to Debussy, in answer to a question concerning his professional occupation, as a Dilettante Hater—thus do the anonymous English translators render the French phrase, *anti-dilettante*. Monsieur Croche was gracious enough to explain his profession:

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"Have you noticed the hostility of a concert-room audience? Have you studied their almost drugged expression of boredom, indifference, and even stupidity? They never grasp the noble dramas woven into the symphonic conflict in which one is conscious of the possibility of reaching the summit of the structure of harmony and breathing there an atmosphere of perfect beauty. Such people always seem like guests who are more or less well-bred; they endure the tedium of their position with patience, and they remain only because they wish to be seen taking their leave at the end; otherwise, why come? You must admit that this is a good reason for an eternal hatred of music."

But Monsieur Croche need not long detain us, especially since Debussy himself so soon casts him aside as an impediment, and devotes himself, in his proper person, to the deliverances which form the substance of these fragmentary essays—comments on living and dead composers, conductors, and virtuosos, and such other matters as open-air music and the *Prix de Rome*.

Debussy as a critic was often witty, often acute. To be sure, he does not paint quite a full-length portrait of Grieg when he writes that his

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music gives us "the charming and bizarre sensation of eating a pink bon-bon stuffed with snow"; but he does convey an essential quality of Grieg. Apparently Debussy feared that some of his comments were over-vivacious—the above among them, for it is omitted from the book. One is glad that he did not expunge his remark about the Paris Opera House: "its boxes are the last salons where conversation still takes place."

Debussy was not always just—indeed, mere justice does not seem to have been his aim. It amused him, perhaps, to exalt Gounod and disparage Gluck; to discuss the symphony since Beethoven without mentioning Brahms; but his disapproval of Wagner amounted to an obsession. Debussy, like Mr. Dick, had his King Charles' Head. It was Richard Wagner. Our author cannot forget him. There was a time, earlier in Debussy's career, when he worshipped the all-conquering Richard; but later, the great enchanter seems to have got on his nerves. Remembering certain pages in Debussy's music in which there are more than a few echoes of *Tristan*, *Parsifal*, and the *Ring*, it would not be difficult, perhaps, for the New Psychology to find a reason for Debussy's persistently hostile at-

titude toward Wagner. Some of his references to the tyrant of Bayreuth are omitted from the book—notably, his comments on *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, published in *Gil Blas* for June 1, 1903, which were excised, it is said, because Debussy felt that they were “too violent”; yet we doubt if anyone in France would have been deeply offended if Debussy had seen fit to include in these essays his amusing characterisation of Wotan and his interesting family—though we hope he has since found time to apologise to Wagner for referring to Siegfried as Brünnhilde’s “brother.” There is enough first-degree incest in the *Ring* as it is without adding more that Wagner did not intend.

It is suggestive that Debussy was most frequently just and illuminating and felicitous when he was considering such matters as Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony*, Moussorgski’s *Nursery Songs*, Weber’s *Oberon*, Rameau, César Franck. Of the music that he loved, he spoke with the distinction and the penetration that were native to his mind. When he wrote of the things that he cherished, the sensitive and enthusiastic artist came to the surface, and put out of court the

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too elaborately casual and ironic trifler. He did not like, for example, the philosophy or the drama of *Parsifal*, but when he could forget those aspects of the work, and think only of the musician who composed the score, he could write that "the musical beauty of the opera is supreme. It is incomparable and bewildering, splendid and strong. *Parsifal* is one of the loveliest monuments of sound ever raised to the serene glory of music."

Such remarks give us a clue to the real value and interest of these comments of Debussy the music-maker masquerading as critic. The interest of these little essays is not always so much in the light that they throw upon their subject-matter as in their disclosure of the mind of the writer. We may disregard the rather anxious levity of the manner, the determined pursuit of irony, the air of elaborate boredom, for the sake of the warm sincerity and enthusiasm, the finely poetic appreciation, that come to utterance in the paragraphs wherein Debussy forgets himself and Monsieur Croche, and remembers, instead, Rameau and Bach, Beethoven, Weber, Moussorgski, Scarlatti, and César Franck. For it

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is then that the conviction issues from these gay, inconsequent, yet often touching pages, that the writer would repeat to us, if he dared, the question of Euripides:

"And shall not loveliness be loved forever?"

LAWRENCE GILMAN

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MONSIEUR CROCHE

THE DILETTANTE HATER



MONSIEUR CROCHE THE DILETTANTE HATER

IT was a lovely evening. I had decided to idle. I mean, of course, that I was dreaming. I do not want to imply that anything of great emotional value was happening or that I was laying the foundations of the Future. I was just enjoying that occasional care-free mood which brings peace with all the world.

And of what was I dreaming? What were my limits? What was the goal of my work? Questions, I fear, prompted by a somewhat childish egotism and the craving to escape from an ideal with which one has lived too long! Questions, moreover, that are but a thin disguise for the foolish yearning to be regarded as superior to others! The struggle to surpass others has never been really great if dissociated from the noble ideal of surpassing oneself—though this, involving as it does the sacrifice of one's cherished personality, implies a very special kind of alchemy.

Besides, superiority over others is difficult to maintain and gives in the end but a barren victory. The pursuit of universal approbation means the waste of a great deal of time in continual demonstration and sedulous self-advertisement. These things may win one the honour of inclusion in a collection of distinguished persons whose names are used as the sauce for insipid conversations on art. But I will not labour the point. I should not like to check ambition.

The evening was as lovely as ever, but, as must already be obvious, I was out of humour with myself—I had lost grip and found that I was drifting into the most irritating generalisations.

At this precise moment my door-bell rang and I made the acquaintance of Monsieur Croche. It is unnecessary to check the flow of this narrative with the obvious or trifling incidents of his first visit.

Monsieur Croche was a spare, wizened man and his gestures were obviously suited to the conduct of metaphysical discussions; his features are best pictured by recalling those of Tom Lane, the jockey, and M. Thiers. He spoke almost in a whisper and never laughed, occasionally enforc-

ing his remarks with a quiet smile which, beginning at his nose, wrinkled his whole face, like a pebble thrown into still waters, and lasted for an intolerably long time.

He aroused my curiosity at once by his peculiar views on music. He spoke of an orchestral score as if it were a picture. He seldom used technical words, but the dimmed and slightly worn elegance of his rather unusual vocabulary seemed to ring like old coins. I remember a parallel he drew between Beethoven's orchestration—which he visualised as a black-and-white formula resulting in an exquisite gradation of greys—and that of Wagner, a sort of many-coloured "make-up" spread almost uniformly, in which, he said, he could no longer distinguish the tone of a violin from that of a trombone.

Since his intolerable smile was especially evident when he talked of music, I suddenly decided to ask him what his profession might be. He replied in a voice which checked any attempt at comment: "Dilettante Hater." Then he went on monotonously and irritably:

"Have you noticed the hostility of a concert-room audience? Have you studied their almost drugged expression of boredom, indifference, and

even stupidity? They never grasp the noble dramas woven into the symphonic conflict in which one is conscious of the possibility of reaching the summit of the structure of harmony and breathing there an atmosphere of perfect beauty. Such people always seem like guests who are more or less well-bred; they endure the tedium of their position with patience, and they remain only because they wish to be seen taking their leave at the end; otherwise, why come? You must admit that this is a good reason for an eternal hatred of music."

I argued that I had observed and had even shared in highly commendable displays of enthusiasm. To which he answered:

"You are greatly in error; for, if you showed so much enthusiasm, it was with the secret hope that some day a similar honor would be paid to you. Surely you know that a genuine appreciation of beauty can only result in silence? Tell me, when you see the daily wonder of the sunset have you ever thought of applauding? Yet you will admit that it is a rather more unrehearsed effect than all your musical trifles. Moreover, face to face with the sunset you feel so mean a thing that you cannot become a part

of it. But before a so-called work of art you are yourself and you have a classical jargon which gives you an opportunity for eloquence."

I dared not confess how nearly I agreed with him, since nothing withers conversation like agreement. I preferred to ask if he himself played any instrument. He raised his head sharply and replied:

"I dislike specialists. Specialisation is for me the narrowing of my universe. It reminds me of those old horses who, in bygone days, worked the roundabouts and died to the well-known strains of the *Marche Lorraine*! Nevertheless, I know all music and it has only given me a special pride in being safe from every kind of surprise. Two bars suffice to give me the clue to a symphony, or to any other musical incident.

"Though we may be certain that some great men have a stubborn determination always to break fresh ground, it is not so with many others, who do nothing but repeat the thing in which they have once succeeded. Their skill leaves me cold. They have been hailed as Masters. Beware lest this be not a polite method of getting rid of them or of excusing the sameness of their performances. In short, I try to forget music be-

cause it obscures my perception of what I do not know or shall only know to-morrow. Why cling to something one knows too well?"

I mentioned the most famous of our contemporaries and Monsieur Croche was more aggressive than ever.

"I am much more interested in sincere and honestly felt impressions than in criticism which often enough resembles brilliant variations on the theme: 'Since you do not agree with me, you are mistaken'; or else: 'You have talent, I have none; it is useless to go any further.' In all compositions I endeavour to fathom the diverse impulses inspiring them and their inner life. Is not this much more interesting than the game of pulling them to pieces, like curious watches?"

"People forget that, as children, they were forbidden to pull their jumping-jacks to pieces—even then such behaviour was treason against the mysteries—and they continue to want to poke their æsthetic noses where they have no business to be. Though they no longer rip open puppets, yet they explain, pull to pieces, and in cold blood slay the mysteries; it is comparatively easy; moreover you can chat about it. Well, well! an obvious lack of understanding excuses

some of them; but others act with greater ferocity and premeditation, for they must of necessity protect their cherished little talents. These last have a loyal following.

"I am only slightly concerned with works hallowed either by success or tradition: once and for all, Meyerbeer, Thalberg, and Reyer are men of genius; otherwise they are of no importance.

"On Sundays, when God is kind, I hear no music: please accept my apologies. Finally, be so good as to note the word 'impressions' which is applicable, since it leaves me free to preserve my emotion from all superfluous æstheticism.

"You are inclined to exaggerate events which, in Bach's day, would have appeared natural. You talk to me about Dukas' sonata. He is probably one of your friends and even a musical critic. Good reasons for speaking well of him. Your praise, however, has been surpassed; for Pierre Lalo, in an article in *Le Temps*, devoted exclusively to this sonata, made simultaneous sacrifice to Dukas of the sonatas written by Schumann and Chopin. As a matter of fact, Chopin's nervous temperament was ill-adapted to the endurance needed for the construction of a sonata: he made elaborate 'first drafts.' Yet we

may say that Chopin inaugurated a special method of treating this form, not to mention the charming artistry which he devised in this connection. He was fertile in ideas, which he often invested without demanding that hundred per cent on the transaction which is the brightest halo of some of our Masters.

"Lalo, of course, evokes the noble shade of Beethoven in reference to the sonata of your friend Dukas. Personally, I should have been only mildly flattered! Beethoven's sonatas are very badly written for the piano; they are, particularly those that came later, more accurately described as orchestral transcriptions. There seems often to be lacking a third hand which I am sure Beethoven heard; at least I hope so. It would have been safer to leave Schumann and Chopin alone; undoubtedly they wrote for the piano; and if that is not enough for Lalo, he ought at least to be grateful to them for having opened a way towards the perfection represented by a Dukas—and incidentally some others."

Monsieur Croche uttered these last words with an imperturbable detachment: a challenge to be taken up or ignored. I was too much interested

to take it up and left him to continue. There was a long silence, during which there came from him no sign of life save for the smoke ascending in blue spirals from his cigar which he watched curiously as if he were contemplating strange distortions—perhaps bold systems. His silence became disconcerting and rather alarming. At length he resumed:

“Music is a sum total of scattered forces. You make an abstract ballad of them! I prefer the simple notes of an Egyptian shepherd’s pipe; for he collaborates with the landscape and hears harmonies unknown to your treatises. Musicians listen only to the music written by cunning hands, never to that which is in nature’s script. To see the sun rise is more profitable than to hear the *Pastoral Symphony*. What is the use of your almost incomprehensible art? Ought you not to suppress all the parasitical complexities which make music as ingenious as the lock of a strong-box? You paw the ground because you only know music and submit to strange and barbarous laws. You are hailed with high-sounding praises, but you are merely cunning! Something between a monkey and a lackey.”

I ventured to say that some had tried in

poetry, others in painting—I added with some trepidation one or two musicians—to shake off the ancient dust of tradition and it had only resulted in their being treated as symbolists or impressionists—convenient terms for pouring scorn on one's fellows.

"It is only journalists and hucksters who treat them so," Monsieur Croche continued without a falter, "and it is of no importance. A beautiful idea in embryo has in it something absurd for fools. There is a surer hope of beauty in such derided men than in those poor sheep who flock docilely to the slaughter-houses which a discerning fate has prepared for them.

"To be unique, faultless! The enthusiasm of society spoils an artist for me, such is my fear that, as a result, he will become merely an expression of society.

"Discipline must be sought in freedom, and not within the formulas of an outworn philosophy only fit for the feeble-minded. Give ear to no man's counsel; but listen to the wind which tells in passing the history of the world."

As he spoke Monsieur Croche appeared to be lit up from within. I seemed to see into him and his words came to me like some strange music.

I cannot adequately convey his peculiar eloquence. Something like this, perhaps:

“Do you know anything more splendid than to discover by chance a genius who has been unrecognised through the ages? But to have been such a genius oneself—can any glory equal it?”

Day was breaking; Monsieur Croche was visibly fatigued and went away. I accompanied him as far as the landing door; he no more thought of shaking my hand than I of thanking him. For a considerable time I listened to the sound of his steps dying away flight by flight. I dared not hope that I should ever see him again.



A TALK ABOUT
THE PRIX DE ROME AND SAINT-SAËNS



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A TALK ABOUT THE PRIX DE ROME AND SAINT-SAËNS

IRRESISTIBLY bewitched by the magic of the ancient forests I had stayed late one autumn day in the country. From the fall of the golden leaves that invest the splendid obsequies of the trees, from the clear angelus that calls the fields to rest, rose a gentle and alluring voice counseling oblivion. The sun was setting in its solitude; no peasants were inspired to take lithographic poses in the foreground. Beasts and men were returning peacefully, having completed some common task whose beauty had this special distinction, that it called no more for encouragement than for disapprobation. Remote were those discussions on art in which the very names of great men sometimes seemed to be words of abuse. Forgotten was the petty artificial feverishness of the "first-night." I was alone, pleasantly care-free; perhaps I had never loved music more than

at this moment when I heard no talk of it. It appeared to me in its complete beauty, not in the hectic scantiness of trivial symphonic or lyrical fragments. Now and again I thought of Monsieur Croche; for he has an unobtrusive and shadowy personality which can be fitted into any landscape without interfering with its composition. But I had to leave these calm joys and to return, impelled by that superstition of the town which makes many men prefer to be hustled sooner than not to be a part of the movement of which they are the creaking and unconscious works. As I was passing along the fashionable sameness of the Boulevard Malesherbes in the drab twilight, I caught sight of the spare figure of Monsieur Croche and, taking advantage of his eccentric habits, I fell into step beside him without further ceremony. A quick glance assured me of his acquiescence and presently he began to speak in his quaint asthmatic voice, intensified now by the rawness of the air which gave a strange quality of tone to every word he uttered.

"Among the institutions on which France prides herself, do you know any more ridiculous than the institution of the *Prix de Rome*? I am aware that this has often been said and still more

often written, but apparently without any effect, since it continues to exist with that deplorable obstinacy which distinguishes absurd ideas."

I ventured to answer that possibly the institution derived its strength from the fact that it had attained in certain circles to the position of a superstition. To have won or not to have won the *Prix de Rome* settled the question of whether one did or did not possess talent. If it was not absolutely certain, it was at least convenient and provided public opinion with a sort of ready-reckoner.

Monsieur Croche whistled through his teeth—to himself, I suppose.

"Yes, you won the *Prix de Rome*—Observe, sir, that I readily admit that one should help young people to travel peacefully in Italy and even in Germany; but why restrict them to those two countries? Above all, why the vexatious diploma which puts them on a plane with fat cattle?

"The *Prix de Rome* is a game; or, rather, a national sport. The rules are taught in places called Conservatoires, Art Schools, etc.

"The contests, preceded by strict training, take place once a year and the umpires of the

game are members of the Institute; hence the curious fact that Bouguereau and Massenet judge these games indifferently whether played in music, painting, sculpture, architecture, or engraving. No one has yet thought of including a dancer amongst them, though that would be logical, Terpsichore being not the most negligible of the nine Muses.

"Without wishing to discredit the institution of the *Prix de Rome*, we may at least maintain its lack of foresight. By that I mean to suggest that very young people are cynically given over to the fascinating temptations of a boundless liberty; a liberty, moreover, which they do not know how to use. They have to fulfil the conditions in the book of rules which controls the movements of 'travelling students,' and lo! they are relieved of any further responsibility. When they arrive in Rome, however, the limited knowledge they possess is of their own craft alone! These young people, confused at the outset by an utter change in their way of life, are expected to provide for themselves the inspirational energy needful to the soul of an artist. This is impossible! And anyone who reads the annual report on the travelling students will be

amazed at the severity of its terms; nor are the holders of studentships to blame if their canons are somewhat confused; one should rather blame those who send them to a country redolent everywhere of the purest art, whilst leaving them free to interpret that art in their own way. Further, is not the academic detachment of the gentlemen of the Institute, who decide which among a number of young persons shall be an artist, astonishing in its ingenuousness? What do they know about it? Are they so sure of being artists themselves? On what then do they base their claim to control so enigmatical a destiny? Would it not, indeed, be better for them to have recourse to the simple method of drawing lots? Who knows? Chance is sometimes so inspired! No, we must look elsewhere— Never judge by works on set themes, or of such a character that it is impossible to know for certain whether the young people know their business as musicians. Let them receive a certificate for a high level of attainment, if that is what is wanted; but no certificate for imagination, since that is useless and grotesque! Once this formality is fulfilled, let them travel across Europe; let them choose a recognised master for themselves; or, if they can

find him, a sensible fellow who can teach them that art is not necessarily restricted to works subsidised by the State!"

Monsieur Croche paused to cough distressingly, for which he blamed his cigar, which had gone out.

"We argue," said he, holding it up, "and this goes out, ironically accusing me of talking too much, warning me that finally it will bury me under a heap of ash: an attractively pantheistic funeral pyre, you will admit, and a mild comment on the fact that one should not believe oneself indispensable, and that one should accept the brevity of life as the most useful of precepts."

Then he turned abruptly to me:

"On Sunday I was at *Lamoureux's*, where they hissed your music. You ought to be grateful to an audience for being sufficiently moved to take the trouble to blow down keys—implements usually considered with justice to be domestic, and therefore unsuitable as weapons of warfare. The method of butcher-boys whistling through their fingers is much to be preferred. One lives and learns. Chevillard, on this occasion, showed once again an astounding and manifold knowledge of music. As to Beethoven's *Ninth Sym-*

phony, his vigour and decision in performance are such that he seems to be playing it by himself; he more than merited the praises usually showered on him."

I could only acquiesce, merely adding that since I did my best to write music for its own sake and disinterestedly, it was logical that I should run the risk of displeasing people who are so devoted to one musical method that they remain faithfully blind to its wrinkles or cosmetics.

"The people of whom we speak," he went on, "are not to blame. You ought, rather, to blame the artists who perform the barren task of ministering to and maintaining the deliberate indifference of the public. In addition to this offence, these same artists know how to strive just long enough to gain a footing in the market-place; but, the sale of their goods once assured, they retire promptly, seeming to apologise to the public for the trouble it has taken to admit them. They wallow in success, resolutely turning their backs on their youth. They are never able to rise to a fame happily reserved for men whose lives, consecrated to the search for a world of ever-renewed sensations and forms, have ended in the

joyous conviction of a noble task accomplished. Such men have obtained what may be termed a 'last night' success—if success be not too mean a word for what is glory.

"Finally, to take a recent example, I am sorry to see how difficult it is to keep one's respect for an artist who was once filled with enthusiasm and a thirst for pure glory. I hate sentimentality! But I wish I could forget that his name is Camille Saint-Saëns!"

I merely answered:

"I have listened to *Les Barbares*."

He continued with an emotion I had not expected from him:

"How is it possible to go so completely wrong? Saint-Saëns knows the world's music better than anyone. How could he forget that he made known and compelled recognition for the turbulent genius of Liszt? How could he forget his worship of the elder Bach?

"Why this itch to write operas and to descend from Louis Gallet to Victorien Sardou, spreading the detestable error that it is necessary to 'write for the stage'? A thing never compatible with 'writing music.'"

I offered a few timid objections, such as:

"Is *Les Barbares* worse than many other operas mentioned by you? Should it make us forget the earlier Saint-Saëns?"

Monsieur Croche interrupted sharply:

"That opera is worse than the others just because it is by Saint-Saëns. He owed it to himself, and still more to music, never to have written that romance embodying a little of everything, even a farandole, of which they praise the 'archaic savour'; it is a feeble echo of that 'Street in Cairo' that was the success of the 1889 Exhibition; its archaism is dubious. Running all through it is a painful seeking for effect, suggested by a libretto containing tags for the suburbs and situations which, by their very nature, make the music absurd. The mimicry of the singers and the traditional sardine-box staging, so grimly preserved by the Opera, polishes off the performance and any hope of art.

"Does no one care sufficiently for Saint-Saëns to tell him he has written music enough and that he would be better employed in following his belated vocation of explorer?" *

Monsieur Croche was tempted by another

* This, no doubt, refers to Saint Saëns' extended musical tours in Europe and even in northern Africa.

cigar and said to me by way of farewell: "Forgive me, but I should not like to spoil this one."

Since I had gone far past my home, I retraced my steps, thinking of Monsieur Croche and of his morose impartiality. Looking at it broadly, it showed a little of the resentment we feel for those whom we have once deeply loved and whose slightest change seems treachery. I tried, too, to picture Saint-Saëns on the evening of the first performance of *Les Barbares* recalling, amid the applause which greeted his name, the sound of the hisses which welcomed the first hearing of his *Danse Macabre*; and I liked to think that such a memory was not distasteful to him.

Then I thought of years now far distant.

My happiest impressions connected with the *Prix de Rome* were independent of it. I was on the Pont des Arts awaiting the result of the competition and watching with delight the scurrying of the little Seine steamers. I was quite calm, having forgotten all emotion due to anything Roman, so seductive was the charm of the gay sunshine playing on the ripples, a charm which keeps those delightful idlers, who are the envy of Europe, hour after hour on the bridges.

Suddenly somebody tapped me on the shoulder, and said breathlessly:

"You've won the prize!"

Believe me or not, I can assure you that all my pleasure vanished! I saw in a flash the boredom, the vexations inevitably incident to the slightest official recognition. Besides, I felt that I was no longer free.

These impressions soon faded; we cannot immediately be insensible of that little ray of provisional glory which the *Prix de Rome* gives; and when I reached the Villa Medici, in 1885, I almost thought I must be that darling of the gods told of in ancient legends.

Cabat, a reputable landscape painter as well as a man of the world of some distinction, was Director of the Académie de France in Rome at the time. He never interfered with the students, save in an administrative capacity. He was delightful. Hébert succeeded him soon after. I gather from a recent conversation that this eminent painter has remained "Roman" to the very finger-tips. Indeed his intolerance of anything against Rome and the Villa Medici is proverbial. He would allow no criticism on those two subjects; and I still remember how, when I

complained of being housed in a room with walls painted green, which seemed to me to retreat as I approached them—a room well known to students as the “Etruscan Tomb”—Hébert assured me that it was of no importance. He even added that one could, if necessary, sleep among the ruins of the Coliseum. The blessing of experiencing a “historic tremor” would compensate for the risk of catching fever.

Hébert loved music passionately, but Wagner’s music not at all. At that time I was a Wagnerian to the pitch of forgetting the simplest rules of courtesy, nor did I imagine that I could ever come almost to agree with this enthusiastic old man who had travelled through all these emotions with his eyes open, whereas we hardly grasped their meaning or how to use them.

Then began that student life, which has something in common with the life of a cosmopolitan hotel, a free college, and the discipline of a hostel. I can recall the dining-room at the Villa, lined with portraits of *Prix de Rome* winners, ancient and modern. They reached to the ceiling, becoming almost indiscernible; it is quite true that no one ever talks about them now. Each face wears

the same rather dejected expression; they seem out of their element. After a lapse of several months the multiplicity of these frames with their fixed dimensions makes the beholder feel that the same prize-winner is repeated to infinity!

The conversations at the table very much resemble the gossip at a *table d'hôte*, and it would be idle to imagine that new theories of art, or even the burning dreams of the old masters are discussed. Though the Villa Medici is therefore a mediocre home of Art, it is nevertheless a very rapid school for the practical side of life, so large looms the thought of the figure one will cut on one's return to Paris. Intercourse with Roman society is virtually non-existent, since its inaccessibility equals its self-sufficiency, and the youthful and thoroughly French independence of a student's mind consorts ill with Roman frigidity. Travel through Italy remains the only resource: a poor resource, from which it is impossible to derive the desired profit owing to a lack of connections in the towns through which one passes as a foreigner. Such connections could be easily established, since a little thought would provide the remedy. The best one can do is to buy photo-

MONSIEUR CROCHE

graphs, the patience of the young women engaged in that trade being as unlimited as their smiles.

* * *

I was never again to meet Monsieur Croche. But do not the ghosts of hushed voices wait on us all? It is only just, therefore, to attribute to him a large share in the following pages, although I realise my inability to differentiate clearly between the speakers in an imaginary conversation.



THE SYMPHONY



9 III 6

THE SYMPHONY

A FOG of verbiage and criticism surrounds the *Ninth Symphony*. It is amazing that it has not been finally buried under the mass of prose which it has provoked. Wagner intended to complete the orchestration. Others fancied that they could explain and illustrate the theme by means of pictures. If we admit to a mystery in this Symphony we might clear it up; but is it worth while? There was not an ounce of literature in Beethoven, not at any rate in the accepted sense of the word. He had a great love of music, representing to him, as it did, the joy and passion piteously absent from his private life. Perhaps we ought in the *Choral Symphony* to look for nothing more than a magnificent gesture of musical pride. A little notebook with over two hundred different renderings of the dominant theme in the *Finale* of this Symphony shows how persistently Beethoven pursued his search and how

entirely musical his guiding motive was; Schiller's lines * can have only been used for their appeal to the ear. Beethoven determined that his leading idea should be essentially self-developing and, while it is of extraordinary beauty in itself, it becomes sublime because of its perfect response to his purpose. It is the most triumphant example of the moulding of an idea to the preconceived form; at each leap forward there is a new delight, without either effort or appearance of repetition; the magical blossoming, so to speak, of a tree whose leaves burst forth simultaneously. Nothing is superfluous in this stupendous work, not even the *Andante*, declared by modern æstheticism to be over long; is it not a subtly conceived pause between the persistent rhythm of the *Scherzo* and the instrumental flood that rolls the voices irresistibly onward to the glory of the *Finale*? Beethoven had already written eight symphonies and the figure nine seems to have had for him an almost mystic significance. He determined to surpass himself. I can scarcely see how his success can be questioned. The flood of human feeling which overflows the ordinary bounds

* The last movement of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* is nominally a setting of Schiller's *Hymn to Joy*.

THE SYMPHONY

of the symphony sprang from a soul drunk with liberty, which, by an ironical decree of fate, beat itself against the gilded bars within which the misdirected charity of the great had confined him. Beethoven must have suffered cruelly in his ardent longing that humanity should find utterance through him; hence the call of his thousand-voiced genius to the humblest and poorest of his brethren. Did they hear it? That is the question. Recently the *Choral Symphony* was performed together with several of Richard Wagner's highly-spiced masterpieces. Once again Tannhäuser, Siegmund and Lohengrin voiced the claims of the *leit-motif*! The stern and loyal mastery of our great Beethoven easily triumphed over this vague and high-flown charlatanism.

It seems to me that the proof of the futility of the symphony has been established since Beethoven. Indeed, Schumann and Mendelssohn did no more than respectfully repeat the same forms with less power. The *Ninth Symphony*, none the less, was a demonstration of genius, a sublime desire to augment and to liberate the usual forms by giving them the harmonious proportions of a fresco.

Beethoven's real teaching then was not to pre-

serve the old forms, still less to follow in his early steps. We must throw wide the windows to the open sky; they seem to me to have only just escaped being closed for ever. The fact that here and there a genius succeeds in this form is but a poor excuse for the laborious and stilted compositions which we are accustomed to call symphonies.

The young Russian school has endeavoured to give new life to the symphony by borrowing ideas from popular melodies; it has succeeded in cutting brilliant gems; but are not the themes entirely disproportionate to the developments into which they have been forced? Yet the fashion for popular airs has spread quickly throughout the musical world—from east to west the tiniest villages have been ransacked, and simple tunes, plucked from the mouths of hoary peasants, find themselves, to their consternation, trimmed with harmonic frills. This gives them an appearance of pathetic discomfort, but a lordly counterpoint ordains that they shall forget their peaceful origin.

Must we conclude that the symphony, in spite of so many attempted transformations, belongs to the past by virtue of its studied elegance, its

THE SYMPHONY

formal elaboration and the philosophical and artificial attitude of its audience? Has it not in truth merely replaced its old tarnished frame of gold with the stubborn brass of modern instrumentation?

A symphony is usually built up on a chant heard by the composer as a child. The first section is the customary presentation of a theme on which the composer proposes to work; then begins the necessary dismemberment; the second section seems to take place in an experimental laboratory; the third section cheers up a little in a quite childish way, interspersed with deeply sentimental phrases during which the chant withdraws as is more seemly; but it reappears and the dismemberment goes on; the professional gentlemen, obviously interested, mop their brows and the audience calls for the composer. But the composer does not appear. He is engaged in listening modestly to the voice of tradition which prevents him, it seems to me, from hearing the voice that speaks within him.



MOUSSORGSKI





IV

MOUSSORGSKI

MOUSSORGSKI'S *Nursery* is a suite of seven melodies, each a scene from childhood. It is a masterpiece. Moussorgski is not well known in France; for which we may be excused by pointing out that he is no better known in Russia. He was born at Karevo, Central Russia, in 1839 and he died in 1881 in the Nicholas Military Hospital, St. Petersburg.

It is evident that he had not very long for the development of his genius; and he lost no time, for he will leave an indelible impression on the minds of those who love him or will love him in the future. No one has given utterance to the best within us in tones more gentle or profound; he is unique, and will remain so, because his art is spontaneous and free from arid formulas. Never has a more refined sensibility been conveyed by such simple means; it is like the art of an enquiring savage discovering music step by

step through his emotions. Nor is there ever a question of any particular form; at all events the form is so varied that by no possibility whatsoever can it be related to any established, one might say official, form, since it depends on and is made up of successive minute touches mysteriously linked together by means of an instinctive clairvoyance.

Sometimes, too, Moussorgski conveys shadowy sensations of trembling anxiety which move and wring the heart. In the *Nursery* there is the prayer of a little girl before she falls asleep which conveys the thoughts and the sensitive emotions of a child, the delightful ways of little girls pretending to be grown-up; all with a sort of feverish truth of interpretation only to be found here. The *Doll's Lullaby* would seem to have been conceived word by word, through an amazing power of sympathetic interpretation and of visualising the realms of that special fairyland peculiar to the mind of a child. The end of the lullaby is so gently drowsy that the little singer falls asleep over her own fancies. Here too is the dreadful little boy astride a stick turning the room into a battlefield, now smashing the arms and now the legs of the poor defenceless chairs.

He cannot do this without hurting himself too. Then we hear tears and screams; happiness vanishes. It is nothing serious; a moment on his mother's lap, a healing kiss, and the battle starts afresh and again the chairs do not know where to hide.

All these little dramas are set down, I repeat, with the utmost simplicity; Moussorgski was content with a construction which would have seemed paltry to Mr. —— I forget his name! or with so instinctive a modulation that it would be quite beyond the range of Mr. —— the same fellow! We shall have more to say about Moussorgski; he has many claims to our devotion.



THE PAUL DUKAS SONATA



THE PAUL DUKAS SONATA

MUSIC, nowadays, tends to become more and more an accompaniment for sentimental or tragic incidents, and plays the ambiguous part of the showman at the door of a booth behind which is displayed the sinister form of "Mr. Nobody."

True lovers of music seldom frequent fairs; they merely have a piano and feverishly play a few pages over and over again; as sure a means of intoxication as "just, subtle and mighty opium," and the least enervating way of spending happy hours. Paul Dukas seems to have had such people in mind when writing his sonata. It breathes a kind of mystic emotion and presents a rigidly connected sequence of ideas which seem to compel a close and careful study. This compelling quality gives a peculiar stamp to nearly all the work of Paul Dukas, even when it is merely episodic. It is the result of the patient intensity with

which he adjusts the several parts of his harmonic scheme. It is to be feared that such work may prove difficult to follow on a concert platform. No reflection is thereby cast on either the beauty or the vision of the sonata. Although the mind conceiving this work unites a constructive purpose with an imaginative idea, there is no need to assume a desire for complexity; nothing could be more deliberately absurd.

Paul Dukas knows the potentialities of music; it is not merely a matter of brilliant tone, playing upon the listener to the point of enervation, an easy thing to understand where several kinds of music which seem antagonistic are united without difficulty. For him music is an inexhaustible store of forms, of pregnant memories which allow him to mould his ideas to the limits of his imaginative world. He is the master of his emotion and knows how to keep it from noisy futility. That is why he never indulges in those parasitic developments which so often disfigure the most beautiful effects. When we consider the third movement of his sonata, we discover under the picturesque surface an energy that guides the rhythmic fantasy with the silent precision of steel mechanism. The same energy prevails in the

THE PAUL DUKAS SONATA

last part, where the art of distributing emotion appears in its highest form; one might even call this emotion constructive, since it displays a beauty akin to perfect lines in architecture, lines that dissolve into and are keyed to the spatial colour of air and sky, the whole being wedded in a complete and final harmony.



VIRTUOSOS



VI

VIRTUOSOS

DURING the last few weeks there has been a great influx of German conductors. This is not as serious as an epidemic, though it makes more noise, a conductor being multiplied by ninety. I do not deny that Weingartner or Richard Strauss, Mottl with his vigour, or the great Richter may make the outraged beauty of the Masters blossom anew, but there is no necessity to go too far, as if Paris were a training school. If only these gentlemen would introduce some novelty into their programmes it might be interesting, but they do not. They offer the same old symphonic stock-in-trade and we shall have the usual demonstrations of the different methods of conducting Beethoven's symphonies. Some of them hurry the symphonies, others drag them; and the greatest sufferer will be poor old Beethoven. Pompous, well-informed persons will declare that such and such a conductor has the se-

cret of the true tempo; anyhow, it makes an excellent subject of conversation. How do these people come to be so sure? Have they received word from the Beyond? That would be a courtesy from the other world which would surprise me very much in Beethoven. If his unhappy spirit occasionally wanders into a concert room, surely it returns hurriedly to the realms where only the music of the spheres is heard! His noble ancestor, Bach, must say to him with some severity:

"My little Ludwig, I see by your somewhat rumpled soul that you have again been in disreputable places."

But perhaps they are not on speaking terms.

The attraction of the virtuoso for the public is very like that of the circus for the crowd. There is always a hope that something dangerous may happen: Mr. X may play the violin with Mr. Y on his shoulders; or Mr. Z may conclude his piece by lifting the piano with his teeth.*

X plays Bach's violin concerto in G, as per-

* The original article read: "M. Ysaye may play the violin with M. Colonne on his shoulder; or M. Pugno may conclude his piece by lifting the piano with his teeth."

haps he alone can without seeming to be an interloper; for he has that freedom of expression, that unaffected beauty of tone, which are essential for its interpretation.

This is all the more noticeable since the rest of the performance moves painfully and heavily. It might be said that this rigid method of interpretation compels the works of Bach to carry the weight of all the ages.

Yet the beauty of this concerto stands out from among the others which appear in Bach's manuscripts; it contains, almost intact, that musical arabesque, or rather that principle of ornament, which is the basis of all forms of art. The word "ornament" has here nothing whatever to do with the meaning attached to it in the musical grammars.

The primitives, Palestrina, Vittoria, Orlando di Lasso and others, made use of this divine arabesque. They discovered the principle in the Gregorian chant; and they strengthened the delicate traceries by strong counterpoint. When Bach went back to the arabesque he made it more pliant and more fluid; and, in spite of the stern discipline which the great composer imposed on

beauty, there was a freshness and freedom in his imaginative development of it which astonishes us to this day.

In Bach's music it is not the character of the melody that stirs us, but rather the tracing of a particular line, often indeed of several lines, whose meeting, whether by chance or design, makes the appeal. Through this conception of ornament the music acquires an almost mechanical precision of appeal to which the audience reacts.

Let no one think that there is anything unnatural or artificial in this. It is infinitely more "true" than the wretched whimperings and the tentative wailings of lyric drama. Above all, the music keeps all its dignity; it never lowers itself by truckling to the desire for sentimentality of those of whom it is said that "they do so love music"; with greater pride it compels their respect, if not their worship.

It is most noticeable that no one was ever known to whistle Bach. Such lip service has not been denied to Wagner when the doors of the concert rooms are opened and the pampered prisoners are released from their padded seats and there is heard in the streets the cheerful whistling

of the *Spring Song* from *Die Walküre* or of the opening phrase of *Die Meistersinger*. I am well aware that, for many people, this is the pinnacle of fame for music. One may, however, think otherwise without an excess of abnormality.

I should add that this conception of ornament has vanished completely; music has been successfully domesticated. It has become a family matter; and when a family does not know what to do with a child—since the brilliant profession of engineering is beginning to be terribly overcrowded—they have him taught music and there is one more mediocrity. If sometimes this or that man of genius tries to escape the galling yoke of tradition, care is taken to swamp him with ridicule; so the poor man of genius elects to die very young, this being the sole performance for which he will get an appreciative audience.



THE OPERA



3 VIIc

THE OPERA

EVERYBODY knows our national Opera House, at least by repute. I can assure you from painful experience that it has not changed. A stranger would take it for a railway station and, once inside, would mistake it for a Turkish bath.

They continue to produce curious noises which the people who pay call music, but there is no need to believe them implicitly.

By special permission and a State subsidy this theatre may produce anything; it matters so little what, that elaborately luxurious *loges à salons* have been installed, so-called because they are the most convenient places for not hearing anything of the music: they are the last *salons* where conversation still takes place.

By this I do not mean to cast any reflection upon the ability of the directors, so sure am I that the best of good intentions are shattered against a

solid and solemn wall of obstinate officialdom, impenetrable by any revealing light. There will never be any change short of a revolution, although revolutionaries do not always give consideration to such institutions. We might hope for a fire, if fire were not too indiscriminating in its effects on undoubtedly innocent persons.

Much however might be done if the busy apathy of the place were shaken off. Why have we not long ago been given the whole of *The Ring*? In the first place this would have enabled us to get rid of it, and Bayreuth pilgrims could no longer bore us with their stories. To produce *Die Meistersinger* is good; *Tristan und Isolde* is better, for the entrancing spirit of Chopin inspires the swirl and passion of the music.

Without prejudice to our grievances, let us consider how far the Opera has served to develop dramatic music in France.

Much of Reyer has been performed. The reasons of his success seem to me peculiar. Some people look at landscapes with the indifference of cattle; and the same people listen to music with cotton-wool in their ears.

Saint-Saëns composed operas with the impeni-

THE OPERA

tence of a convinced symphonist. Is that where the future will look for the true reasons for continuing to admire him?

Massenet seems to have been the victim of the fluttering fans of his fair hearers, who flirted them so long to his glory; he yearned to reserve for himself the beating of those perfumed wings; unfortunately he might as well have tried to tame a cloud of butterflies. Perhaps he only lacked patience and undervalued silence. His influence on contemporary music is obvious, but admitted grudgingly by certain persons who owe much to him, though they have the hypocrisy and ingratitude to deny it.

Among too many stupid ballets Lalo's *Namouna* is something of a masterpiece. Who knows what dumb hatred has buried it so deeply that we never hear of it now? What a loss to music!

There has been throughout no attempt at anything really new; nothing but a kind of humming of machinery, a continual reiteration. It might be said that when music enters the Opera it dons a prescribed uniform like a convict; moreover at the Opera music assumes the pompous proportions of the building, vying with the

well-known great staircase which, through an error in the perspective or too much detail, in fact appears insignificant.

Why should not the Opera be administered by a council of people too rich to trouble about sound speculations, but likely to take pride in having plenty of money for the production of great works? It is only a question of judgment and selection.

Then, why not have a perfectly free and independent director, whose business would be, first, to know all about art movements and, secondly, to ensure in advance a programme of classical and carefully chosen works? When Wagner's operas are given, why not invite Richter to conduct the orchestra? I merely take this as an example. This would provide an attraction for the public, as well as the certainty of a fine performance. I do not wish to labour the point, but what I suggest is no innovation, since such a scheme is, in effect, the principle of Covent Garden, where the performances are in every respect excellent. It is lamentable that we cannot do better, if not equally well, at the Opera. Even if it be a question of money I refuse to agree.

To sum up, the important thing is to perform

a great deal of music and not to yield to the wilful indifference of the public.

Certain artists have a serious responsibility for this indifference; they know how to strive just long enough to gain a footing in the musical market-place, but the sale of their goods once assured they retire promptly, seeming to apologise to the public for the trouble it has taken to admit them. Resolutely turning their backs on their youth they are lulled to sleep by success. They are never able to rise to a fame happily reserved for men whose lives, consecrated to the search for a world of ever-renewed sensations and forms, have ended in the joyous confidence of a noble task accomplished. Such men have obtained what may be termed a "last-night" success—if "success" be not too mean a word for what is glory. I am not so bold as to demand that the Opera should ever assist the latter, but it need not exclusively support the former. My aim has been to prove that the wrongs are not all on one side.



NIKISCH



§ VIII §

NIKISCH

ON Sunday the overpowering glare of the sun seemed to make it unthinkable to listen to music. The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Nikisch, took the opportunity of giving its first concert. I hope that God will forgive my having gone back on my resolutions and that others more fortunate paid homage to the grass generously spread by Him for the reception of sausage skins and the logical development of idylls.

All the well-known and attentive ears that Paris boasts were there, and particularly the dear wonderful ladies! This is the best kind of audience for anyone who knows how to make use of it. Almost all that is required to rouse its enthusiasm is a graceful attitude or a romantically waved lock of hair.

Nikisch has the pose and the lock, but fortunately he has more solid qualities too. More-

over, he has his orchestra marvellously in hand and one seems to be in the presence of men whose sole aim is the serious production of music; for they are staid and unaffected like the figures in a primitive fresco—quite a touching novelty.

Nikisch is an unique virtuoso, so much so that his virtuosity seems to make him forget the claims of good taste! I would take as an example his performance of the *Tannhäuser* overture, in which he forces the trombones to a *portamento* suitable at best to the stout lady responsible for the sentimental ditties at the *Casino de Suresnes* and in which he stresses the horns at points where there is no particular reason for bringing them into prominence. These are effects without any appreciable causes and are amazing in a musician as experienced as Nikisch shows himself at all other times. At an earlier period he had proved his unique gifts in Richard Strauss' *The Merry Pranks of Till Eulenspiegel*. This piece might almost be called, "An hour of original music in a lunatic asylum." The clarinets leap in frenzied curves, the trumpets everlastingly choke and the horns, forestalling a latent sneeze, hasten to rejoin: "God bless you!" while a big drum goes boom! boom! apparently emphasis-

ing the antics of the clowns. One wants either to shout with laughter or to shriek with pain. Then follows the startling discovery that everything is in the right place; for, if the double-basses blew down their bows and the trombones fiddled on their brass tubes with an imaginary bow, or if Nikisch perched himself on the knee of a programme seller, it would not be in the least surprising. Meanwhile there is no gainsaying the fact that genius is shown at times in this work, above all in the amazing orchestral assurance, the mad rhythm that sweeps us along from beginning to end and forces us to share in all the hero's merry pranks. Nikisch conducted this ordered tumult with astounding coolness and the ovation which greeted both his orchestra and himself was eminently justified.

During the performance of Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony* a flock of sparrows fluttered to the windows of the *Cirque* and twittered pleasantly. Nikisch had the grace not to demand the expulsion of these impertinent melomaniacs, who were probably drunk with the ether or perhaps were merely innocent critics of a symphony which cannot decide once and for all to remain unfinished.



MASSENET



IX

MASSENET

I SHOULD like to try to give, not a portrait of Massenet, but rather some indication of the mental attitude he aimed at conveying through his music; besides, the incidents or foibles that constitute the life of a man must be posthumous to have genuine interest.

Music was never for Massenet the cosmic voice heard by Bach and Beethoven; to him it was rather a delightful avocation.

Look at the long list of his works. You will note a constant preoccupation which directs his advance like the hand of fate. It makes him re-discover in his last opera, *Grisélidis*, some of the escapades of one of his youthful works, *Eve*. Is this not due to a kind of mysterious and irresistible fate which explains Massenet's untiring curiosity in seeking in music the data for the history of the feminine soul? Here are all or nearly all the women's faces which have been the stuff of so many dreams! The smile of a Manon in a

panniered gown is born again on the lips of a modern Sappho, again to make men weep! The knife of the woman of Navarre matches the pistol of the conscienceless Charlotte in *Werther*.

On the other hand, we know how vibrant his music is with thrills, transports and would-be eternal embraces. The harmonies are like enlacing arms, the melodies are the necks we kiss; we gaze into women's eyes to learn at any cost what lies behind. Philosophers and robust people assert that nothing lies behind; but that this does not entirely exclude a contrary opinion the example of Massenet proves, at least in melody; to this preoccupation moreover he owes the position he holds in contemporary art—which we secretly envy him, a fact that makes it probable that it is not to be despised.

Fortune, being a woman, certainly ought to treat Massenet kindly and even on occasions to be unfaithful to him; and in this she has not failed. At one time, owing to his great success, it was correct to imitate his melodious fancies; then, suddenly, those who had so calmly plagiarised him turned violently against him.

He was reproached with having shown excessive sympathy for Mascagni and not enough

worship of Wagner. This reproach is as false as it is inadmissible. Massenet continued heroically to court the approbation of his feminine admirers as before. I confess I cannot understand why it is any better to please old cosmopolitan Wagnerian ladies than scented young ones, even though they do not play the piano very well. In short, he was right. He can only seriously be reproached with his infidelities to Manon. He had discovered a suitable form for his flirtatious inclinations; and he should not have tried to impose them on the Opera. No one flirts at the Opera; for there they shriek unintelligible words at the top of their voices and if any vows are exchanged it is with the approval of the trombones. Logically, the finer shades of sentiment must be lost in the resulting din. Massenet surely would have been wiser to go on expressing his genius in delicate colours and whispering melodies and in light airy structures. The refinements of art would not thereby have been excluded; they would have been more exquisite, that is all. There is no lack, however, of musicians who grasp music with outstretched arms while the trumpets blare. Why increase the number uselessly? And why encourage an increase of the

taste for tedious music which comes to us from the neo-Wagnerians and which might well favour us by returning to the country of its origin?

Massenet, by reason of his unique gifts and his facility, might have opposed considerable influence to that deplorable movement. It is not always best to do in Rome as the Romans do; a piece of advice which I think the least subtle of his fair hearers might have given him.

Massenet was the most truly loved of all contemporary musicians. It is, indeed, to that very love that he owes the unique standing which he still has in the musical world.

His brethren could not readily forgive this power of pleasing which, strictly speaking, is a gift. It must be admitted that this gift is not indispensable, particularly in art; to take but one example, Bach never "pleased" in the sense of the word as applied to Massenet. Has one ever heard of young milliners humming *The Passion according to St. Matthew*? I do not think so. But everyone knows that they wake in the morning and sing *Manon* or *Werther*. Make no mistake: this is a delightful kind of fame, the secret envy of many of those great purists who can only warm their hands at the somewhat

pallid flame of the approbation of the elect.

Massenet amply succeeded in what he set out to do, a fact which caused some to believe that they were taking their revenge by calling him—*sotto voce*—Paul Delmet's best pupil. That is merely a joke in the worst possible taste. He has been much imitated abroad as well as at home.

To endeavour to overthrow those whom they imitate is the first principle of wisdom with certain artists, who call such reprehensible methods the struggle for art. This hackneyed phrase is somewhat disingenuous and has, moreover, the defect of likening art to a kind of sport.

In art the struggle is more often against oneself alone and victories so achieved are perhaps the finest. By a curious irony, however, we are afraid of a victory over ourselves, and it seems preferable to be quietly merged in the public or to imitate our friends, which amounts to the same thing.

In the time of Napoleon, every French mother hoped that her son would be another Napoleon. The game of war frustrated most of those dreams. Besides, there are such things as unique destinies. Such, in its own class, is the destiny of Massenet.



OPEN-AIR MUSIC



3 X 6

OPEN-AIR MUSIC

IT is certain that in France there is no love left to-day for street-organs. It is only once a year at beflagged celebrations of the Fourteenth of July, or in vacant lots more suited to the mutterings of hooligans than to the fugitive dreams of melomaniacs, that they still venture to grind out melancholy strains from their husky pipes.

Ought we to regret this fact and conclude that there is a decline in the standard of music in France to-day? My business is neither to make any such assertion nor to blame anyone.

Nevertheless, M. Gavioli, the famous maker of these instruments, does not seem quite to have done his duty. Is it really enough to have recorded during recent years the *Cavalleria Rusticana Intermezzo*, the *Valse Bleue*, and a few other masterpieces? Why so limited a programme? Might he not have paid some attention to the need for popularity of our notable con-

temporaries? Is there not a mass of music now mouldering away in the programmes of Sunday concerts, the revival of which on the street-organ would be delightful, if M. Gavioli were not so hopelessly insensible to the demands of his age? Be modern, sir, we implore you! Do not allow negro kings to monopolise the charms of a perfect instrument. Know that the Shah of Persia owns an electric organ which plays the Prelude to *Parsifal* with the utmost verisimilitude. If you think that these performances in the harems do Wagner justice, you are wrong. Despite his taste for the mysterious, this particular example goes a little too far, you will admit. Besides, did he not declare again and again that he could only be understood in France? May we hope that you will eventually see where your duty lies? The Opera does not shrink from playing *Pagliacci*; shrink then no longer from making street-organs worthy to perform *The Ring*.

As a matter of fact the apparent futility of these reflections arises because people only worry about the banality of things; they deplore them, but never remedy them. To those who find this defence of the street-organ ridiculous, the an-

swer is that we are not referring to the pleasures of the dilettante, but to the duty of dealing with the mediocrity of the herd mind.

Without defending the frequenters of *cafés-concerts* any more than those of the *Concerts Lamoureux*, we must admit that they are both right in their special planes. There are others who can only be moved by open-air music, which, as performed in these days, is certainly the best imaginable educator of mediocrity.

In short, why have the amenities of squares and promenades remained the monopoly of military bands? I know quite well that there is the music of the *Garde Républicaine*, but that is on a higher plane—it is practically an instrument of diplomacy.

I should like to imagine simpler entertainments in greater harmony with natural scenery. Is not military music an anodyne for the rigours of the march and a source of joy in the streets? It sums up the patriotism that thrills the hearts of each one of us; it is the link between the little pastry-cook with his dreams and the old gentleman who thinks of Alsace-Lorraine and never speaks of it. Never would the idea occur to any-

one to rob that music of its noble privilege; but, among the trees, it is like the strident notes of some huge gramophone.

We can imagine a great orchestra, further strengthened by human voices—not a choral society, thank you! Here is the germ of a kind of music composed especially for the open air, on broad lines, with bold vocal and instrumental effects, which would sport and skim among the tree-tops in the sunshine and fresh air. Harmonies which would seem out of place in an enclosed concert room would be in their true environment here. One might even discover the means of escape from the fads about form and the arbitrarily fixed tone values which so awkwardly encumber music.

I should add that I do not suggest the “whole-sale” but the “grand” plan; I do not suggest plaguing the echoes to repeat great masses of sound but using them to prolong an harmonic dream in the soul of the crowd. The murmuring of the breeze would be mystically mingled with the rustling of the leaves and the scent of the flowers, since music can unite all of them in harmony so completely natural that it seems to become one with them. The tall peaceful trees

would be like the pipes of a great organ and would lend their branches to clusters of children, who would be taught the charming rounds of long ago, to which the feeble tunes which disgrace the towns and gardens of to-day are such poor successors.

We might even rediscover that counterpoint, which we have made an academic study, yet which, in the hands of the old masters of the French Renaissance, had something of laughter.

I confess that if this happened I could bear the banishment of the street-organ without a tear; but I fear that music will continue to suggest closed windows.


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RECOLLECTIONS  
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RECOLLECTIONS

THE recent foggy weather has made me think of London and of the charming play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, whose true and more poetic title would be *A Dream of St. John's Eve*, the shortest night of the year. A warm night, radiant with stars whose short-lived enchantment lies between a lingering twilight and an impatient dawn. A dream night whose span is but a single dream. Nor was Oberon, the fairy king, saved from a touch of gracious jealousy by his cares as master of the midnight revels; he even found time to test the too frail virtue of Titania with the aid of Puck, or Robin Goodfellow, that merry reveller of the night, that mischievous rascal, that sweet player of pranks, whose aid one could invoke by calling him "Hobgoblin and sweet Puck."

But I am especially reminded of a man, now nearly forgotten, at least in the theatre. I saw

him trudging along the London streets, his body consumed by the vivid light that was in him and in his face that radiance peculiar to those who have known beauty. On he went, sustained by the feverish desire to postpone death until he had heard that posthumous work born of the fiery pangs of his ebbing life. By what miracle did he revive in it that wild passion, that rhythm of romance, which had won such immediate recognition for his youthful genius? No one will ever know.

His work had a sort of dreamy melancholy, characteristic of his time, though never marred by the crude German moonshine in which nearly all his contemporaries were bathed.

He was perhaps the first to face the problem of establishing the due relationship of the infinite spirit of nature to the finite spirit of the individual. At all events he utilised the legend, feeling that thus music would find its natural course. For music, and music alone, has the power of evoking at will imaginary scenes—that real yet elusive world which gives birth in secret to the mystic poetry of the night and the thousand nameless sounds of the leaves caressed by the moonlight.

He was master of every known means of interpreting the fantastic through music. Even in our own days, rich as they are in the science of orchestration, few have surpassed him. If he attached too much importance to the flourish and the *coloratura* we must not forget that he married a singer. Probably he adored her. It is a sentimental reason, yet none the worse for that; particularly so because his taste for tying true lovers' knots with graceful semi-quavers did not hinder him time and again from using simple and beautiful language free from useless verbiage. This man—have you not all recognised him?—was Karl Maria von Weber.* The opera, the final effort of his genius, was *Oberon*, first performed in London. You see I had excellent reasons for thinking of that city.

Some years earlier he had succeeded in getting *Der Freischütz* produced at Berlin, and afterwards *Euryanthe*. That is the reason for his becoming the father of that romantic school to which we owe Berlioz, who is so enamoured of the romance of colour that he sometimes forgets

* Caroline Brandt, a young actress and singer, married Weber in 1817; the famous composer was born Entin, Oldenburg, in 1786, and died London, 1826.

music, Wagner, the great master symbolist, and, nearer to our own time, Richard Strauss, whose imagination seems created for romanticism. Weber may be proud of such descendants and the glory of the offspring of his genius may console him for the fact that scarcely anything but the overtures of the above works are ever performed.



RAMEAU



❧ XII ❧

RAMEAU

CHARLES BORDES is famous throughout the entire world for the best of all possible reasons. In the first place he is an accomplished musician in every sense of the word; in the second place he has the inspiration of those fiery missionaries of old times whose spirit shone out in the face of difficulties. It is admittedly less dangerous to preach Palestrina to the crowds than the Gospel to savages; yet one may meet with the same hostility—the difference is only in the penalty: in the one case it is scalping, in the other yawning.

Charles Bordes, appointed choir-master at *Saint Gervais de Paris*, inaugurated the series of "Holy Weeks of Saint Gervais," the success of which was so considerable as to alarm the church dignitaries, who thought, quite wrongly, that it distracted the attention of the faithful. He who reigns in heaven above, however, gave no sign of being shocked.

This caused Bordes to found the *Association des Chanteurs de Saint Gervais* for performing old choral music. From that moment dates his incessant craving for propaganda, for there is no town in which this society has not preached its gospel. It would not be surprising if one day Bordes were to lead his associates to Sirius or Aldebaran.

He was also the promoter of the *Schola Cantorum*, originally founded for the restoration of church music, but subsequently extending its programme until it became a kind of musical High School.

It was there that we heard recently the first two acts of *Castor and Pollux*. Rameau to many people is the author of nothing but the celebrated *Rigaudon* from *Dardanus*.

Here is an excellent example of the peculiar temperament of the French which impels them to adopt art formulas as eagerly as they adopt fashions in clothes which bear no relation to their native genius.

Gluck's influence on French music is recognised, an influence only possible through the intervention of the Dauphine, Marie-Antoinette, an Austrian—a curious analogy to the case of

Wagner, who owed the production of *Tannhäuser* in Paris to the influence of Mme. de Metternich, also an Austrian. Yet Gluck's genius is deeply rooted in the work of Rameau. *Castor and Pollux* is an epitome of preliminary sketches developed later by Gluck. Considerable evidence can be adduced for the statement that Gluck was only able to supplant Rameau on the French stage by assimilating Rameau's finest creations and making them his own. To what does the Gluck tradition owe its survival? The false and pompous treatment of recitative is enough, but there is also his habit of rudely interrupting the action, as, for example, where Orpheus, having lost his Eurydice, sings a song which does not precisely indicate a very mournful state of mind. But because it is Gluck we bend the knee. Rameau need only have changed his nationality—that was his mistake.

We have, however, in Rameau's work a pure French tradition full of charming and tender delicacy, well balanced, strictly declamatory in recitative and without any affectation of German profundity or over-emphasis or impatient explanation, as if to say: "You are a collection of utter idiots who understand nothing unless you

are first compelled to believe that the moon is made of green cheese." We may, however, regret that French music should so long have followed a course treacherously leading it away from that clarity of expression, that terse and condensed form, which is the peculiar and significant quality of the French genius. I know quite well the theory of free trade in art and its valuable results; but this does not excuse us from having so completely forgotten the tradition that permeates Rameau's work, a tradition filled with far-reaching, almost unparalleled discoveries.

To return to *Castor and Pollux*. The scene is the burial-place of the Kings of Sparta. After an overture, only required to allow time for the silken folds of the panniered dresses to be spread out, the wailing voices of a chorus solemnising the obsequies of Castor are heard. At once we breathe an atmosphere of tragedy which yet remains human. We are not so much conscious of the peplum and of the helmet as of people weeping as we might weep ourselves. Then Talaïra, Castor's love, enters and utters the sweetest, most touching lament that ever sprang from a loving heart. Pollux appears at the head of his warriors, who have avenged the outrage on Castor. Then

the chorus and a martial ballet superb in its forceful rhythm, slashed now and again with a blare of trumpets, end the first act.

The second act introduces us to the fore-court of Jupiter's temple, where all is prepared for a sacrifice; and this is a sheer marvel; I wish I could describe it in its entirety. The aria of Pollux, "Nature, love, who share my fate," has so personal a touch, such freshness of construction, that time and space vanish, and Rameau seems to be a contemporary to whom we render our homage on leaving. How moving it is!

Then follows the scene in which Pollux and Talaira sacrifice their great love to the will of the gods; the entrance of Jupiter's High Priest; the appearance of Jupiter himself seated on a throne of glory, so royally gentle and compassionate of the human sorrow of Pollux, a poor mortal whom he, the chief of the gods, could crush at will—as I said, it ought to be described in its entirety.

And then the last scene of the act. Hebe leads in the dance the Celestial Pleasures whose hands are filled with garlands for the capture of Pollux. Jupiter has ordained the enchantments of this scene in order to wean Pollux from his desire for

death. Never before has so calm and soothing an appeal to the senses been so perfectly rendered, so luminous is its play in the supernatural atmosphere that all the Spartan strength of Pollux is needed to escape its spell and remember Castor. I myself had forgotten him for the moment.

In conclusion we must not fail to mention the exquisite grace of the music, a grace which never descends to affectation or to meretricious beauty. Has such music been ousted by a taste for "the pretty," or by our preference for Byzantine craftsmanship?



BEETHOVEN



2 XIII 6

BEETHOVEN

LAST Sunday was an irresistibly beautiful day. The first sunshine of spring seemed to preclude all idea of listening to music; it was weather to bring the swallows back again.

Weingartner seized the opportunity to conduct the orchestra of the *Concerts Lamoureux*. No one is perfect.

He first conducted the *Pastoral Symphony* with the care of a conscientious gardener. He tidied it so neatly as to produce the illusion of a meticulously finished landscape in which the gently undulating hills are made of plush at ten francs the yard and the foliage is crimped with curling-tongs.

The popularity of the *Pastoral Symphony* is due to the widespread misunderstanding that exists between Man and Nature. Consider the scene on the banks of the stream; a stream to which it appears the oxen come to drink, so at

least the bassoons would have us suppose; to say nothing of the wooden nightingale and the Swiss cuckoo-clock, more representative of the artistry of M. de Vaucanson* than of genuine Nature. It is unnecessarily imitative and the interpretation is entirely arbitrary.

How much more profound an interpretation of the beauty of a landscape do we find in other passages in the great Master, because, instead of an exact imitation, there is an emotional interpretation of what is invisible in Nature. Can the mystery of a forest be expressed by measuring the height of the trees? Is it not rather its fathomless depths that stir the imagination?

In this symphony Beethoven inaugurates an epoch when Nature was seen only through the pages of books. This is proved by the storm, a part of this same symphony, where the terror of man and Nature is draped in the folds of the cloak of romanticism amid the rumblings of rather disarming thunder.

It would be absurd to imagine that I am wanting in respect for Beethoven; yet a musician of his genius may be deceived more completely than

* Jacques de Vaucanson, 1709-1782, a mechanician of Grenoble; his automata *The Duck* and *The Flute Player* are famous.

another. No man is bound to write nothing but masterpieces; and, if the *Pastoral Symphony* is so regarded, the expression must be weakened as a description of the other symphonies. That is all I mean.

Then Weingartner conducted an orchestral fantasy by Chevillard; in which the most extraordinary orchestration lends itself to a highly personal method of developing his ideas. A gentleman who was extremely fond of music furiously expressed his dislike of the fantasy by whistling on a key. This was excessively stupid. Could anyone tell whether the said gentleman was criticising Weingartner's manner of conducting or the composer's music? One reason is that the key is not an instrument of warfare, but a domestic article. Monsieur Croche always preferred the butcher-boys' elegant method of whistling with their fingers; it is louder. Perhaps the gentleman is still young enough to learn this art!

Weingartner recovered ground by conducting Liszt's *Mazeppa* magnificently. This symphonic poem is full of the worst faults, occasionally descending even to the commonplace; yet the stormy passion that rages throughout captures

us at last so completely that we are content to accept it without further reasoning. We may affect an air of contempt on leaving, because that is pleasant—though it is sheer hypocrisy. The undeniable beauty of Liszt's work arises, I believe, from the fact that his love of music excluded every other kind of emotion. If sometimes he gets on easy terms with it and frankly takes it on his knee, this surely is no worse than the stilted manner of those who behave as though they were being introduced to it for the first time; very polite, but rather dull. Liszt's genius is often disordered and feverish, but that is better than rigid perfection, even in white gloves.

Weingartner's personal appearance suggests at the first glance a new knife. His gestures have a kind of angular grace; then suddenly the imperious movement of his arms seems to compel the trombones to bellow and to drive the cymbals to frenzy. It is most impressive and verges on the miraculous; the enthusiasm of the audience knows no bounds.



THE PEOPLE'S THEATRE



• XIV •

THE PEOPLE'S THEATRE

FOR some time now there has been a widespread movement for developing in the soul of the people a taste for the arts in general and for music in particular. I quote as examples the *Conservatoire de Mimi Pinson*, where Gustave Charpentier practises the theories dear to his youthful genius. This enables him to give a taste for freedom in art as well as in life to girls whose æsthetic outlook has hitherto been bounded on the north by Delmet and on the south by Decourcelle. Now they know the names of Gluck and Bruneau; and their pretty tapering fingers, so skilled in tying bows, caress Lyon's chromatic harp. They will certainly grow into charming young women instead of the silly non-entities they were otherwise likely to become.

The fame of *Les Noces de Jeanette* is perishing too; and as for *La Dame Blanche*, she is at death's door.

Chevaliers félons et méchants
Qui tramez complots malfaisants . . .

you need no longer trouble yourselves to guard against that old lady. I pass over the songs where Mignon laments her native land and other young persons their "faded posies"; for they are in the coolest of thy lakes, O Norway!*

Then we have the *Théâtre-Roulotte* of Catulle Mendès, a delightful idea, also what is known as *Thirty Years of the Stage*, immortalised by A. Bernheim, who carries the solemnity of the *Comédie Française* into the most incongruous surroundings.

In my humble way I have assisted in endeavours¹ to spread art among the people; and I confess that I have only the memory of deep depression. Usually those who make themselves responsible for these attempts assume a sort of patronising goodwill of which the poor victims perfectly appreciate the spuriousness and affectation. They certainly make up their minds to laugh or cry to order. In any case it is not genuine. An instinctive feeling of envy hovers vaguely over this vision of luxury imported for

* Reference would appear to be made here to Grieg.

a moment into their dismal lives; the women appraise the frocks with forced smiles; the men make comparisons, feel discontented, and dream of impossible joys; others regret their sixpences, and all go home sadly to eat their soup which is sure to be spoiled that night—flavoured just a little, I think, with tears.

I can quite well appreciate the good motives underlying these social efforts and inspired enthusiasms. Nothing is more exciting than to act the part of a little Buddha with an egg and two glasses of water a day and to give all else to the poor; to indulge in endless reveries on the origin of the universe and the all-pervading godhead, hotchpotches of *natura naturans* and a delicious confusion of the Ego and the Non-Ego and its reabsorption into the Universal Soul. It is all very pretty and useful in conversation; but unhappily it has not an ounce of practical value and sometimes even leads to dangerous results.

If it is really a good thing to provide performances for the people, there should be a definite idea as to the character of such performances. Perhaps it would be best to revive the ancient games of the Roman imperial circus. We have our Zoölogical Gardens which would feel bound

to lend their finest inmates; the old lions, who yawn from the sheer boredom of gazing at everlasting soldier boys and nurse maids, would at once recover their natural ferocity. Would it be more difficult to find art enthusiasts devoted enough to be the victims? After all, one never knows. If the price is high enough—

But I am afraid we must give that up and return to the People's Theatre. All needs are supposed to have been met by the production of the old repertory plays or antique dramas breathless with romanticism.

That is not a very brilliant effort! What we must discover, it seems to me, is a form of art, suited both in its essence and in its staging to the greatest possible number. I do not here pretend to be axiomatic, but why not remember the Greeks?

Do we not find in Euripides, Sophocles, and Æschylus the mighty impulses of humanity simply portrayed with such natural tragedy of effects that they are at once intelligible to the least enlightened and to the least cultured minds? For example, conceive of a performance of the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus which has been so admirably translated by Paul Claudel.

Would not this be nearer to the heart of the people than all the psychological or fashionable subtleties of our present-day repertory? When it is a question of making people forget their domestic cares, nothing can be too sublime; if the aim be to snatch them away from life, to give them exact interpretations of it, however excellent, must be harmful.

This brings me to mention the People's Opera, a recent scheme, the realisation of which presents the most serious difficulties. At a pinch one might discover a comic actor; the old Free Theatre affords a striking example of this; but as yet we have not gone far enough with the science of suggestion to compel the first passer-by to play the double-bass. Whether it seems so or not, this little fact is extremely important. An opera needs an orchestra and where shall we find it? Singers are necessary and a chorus and so on. What shall be performed? Works from the old-fashioned repertory, as usual? Something like *La Juive* or a musty *Muette de Portici*?

If for the moment we abandon the belief in a voyage to Utopia, still there is a method of settling the matter by combining the People's Theatre with the People's Opera—in fact, as I wrote

above, by reverting to the dramatic methods of the ancient Greeks. Let us rediscover Tragedy, strengthening its primitive musical setting by means of the infinite resources of the modern orchestra and a chorus of innumerable voices; let us remember at the same time how effective is the combination of pantomime and dance accompanied by the fullest possible development of lighting required for a vast audience. We could glean valuable hints for this from the entertainments arranged by the Javanese princes, where the fascination of speech without words, that is to say of pantomime, almost attains perfection, since it is rendered by action and not by formulas. The trouble about our theatre is that we have tried to confine it to the intellectual element alone.

Such a change would be so successful that we should find it impossible to bear anything else. Paris would become a centre to which pilgrims in search of beauty would flock from all over the world. To sum up, we must have large ideas. No more petty undertakings based on disingenuous theorising! Since it is absolutely necessary to build a special theatre, as no existing one would be suitable, let the Municipal Council and the

State try to come to terms—they need not make a habit of it.

It must not be a theatre in which the gilding catches the eye unpleasantly, but a bright, cheerful house, attractive to everyone. I need not emphasise the necessity for completely free seats; if necessary let a loan be raised. There could never be one for a more lofty or strictly patriotic object.

We must never forget that there is a law of beauty! In spite of isolated protests we seem to be in danger of forgetting it. The thousand-headed monster mediocrity has so many worshippers in the modern artistic associations.



RICHARD STRAUSS



XV

RICHARD STRAUSS

RICHARD STRAUSS, who recently conducted the orchestra at the *Concerts Lamoureux*, is no relation to *The Blue Danube*; he was born at Munich in 1864, where his father was a musician in the Royal Household. He is practically the only original composer in modern Germany; his remarkable technique in the art of handling an orchestra allies him to Liszt, while his desire to found his music on literature allies him to Berlioz; witness the titles of his symphonic poems, *Don Quixote*, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, *The Merry Pranks of Till Eulenspiegel*. As a matter of fact the art of Richard Strauss is not invariably so exclusively interpretative; but he undoubtedly thinks in colour-pictures and he seems to draw the line of his ideas by means of the orchestra. This is no commonplace method and few people have adopted it. Richard Strauss, moreover, develops it along peculiarly personal

lines; it is no longer the rigid and architectural method of Bach or Beethoven, but the working out of a scheme of rhythmic colours; he combines with the utmost assurance the most wildly discordant notes, quite regardless of their possibly painful effect as long as they satisfy his demand that they should live.

All these characteristics reach a pitch of frenzy in the *Heldenleben*, the symphonic poem of which Richard Strauss here gave the second performance in Paris. One may not care for certain experiments which border on the commonplace or for a kind of tortured Italianism; but after a minute or two one is captured first by the tremendous versatility of his orchestration, then by the frenzied energy which carries one with him for as long as he chooses; the hearer is no longer master of his emotions, he does not even notice that this symphonic poem exceeds the limits that our patience usually allows to such compositions.

Once again, it is a book of pictures, or even a cinematograph. But one must admit that the man who composed such a work at so continuously high a pressure is very nearly a genius.

He began by giving *Italy*, a symphonic fantasy in four parts—an early work, I believe—

where the future originality of Strauss is already discernible. The elaboration seemed to me a trifle long and stereotyped. But the third part, *In the Bay of Scorrento*, is very beautiful in colour. Then came a love scene from *Feuersnot*, his last opera. This suffered considerably through being detached from its context; and, since the programme gave no explanation, its relation to the rest was wholly incomprehensible. An episode which evoked such orchestral torrents seemed somewhat formidable for a love scene! It is probable that in the opera the torrent is justified. Perhaps it may afford an opportunity for the opera houses to produce something new; for I do not think they can pretend to teach us anything at all by producing the modern operas of Young Italy.

Richard Strauss has no wild lock of hair, no epileptic gestures. He is tall and has the free and determined bearing of those great explorers who journey among savage tribes with a smile on their lips. Perhaps this sort of bearing is necessary to shake the conventionality of the public. He has, however, the head of a musician; but his eyes and gestures are those of a Superman, to quote Nietzsche, from whose teaching he must

have imbibed his energy. From Nietzsche too he must have learned his lofty scorn of feeble sentimentalities and his desire that music should not go on for ever providing a more or less satisfactory illumination for our nights, but that it should shine like the sun. I can assure you that there is sunshine in the music of Strauss. Unquestionably the majority of the audience did not like sunshine of this kind, for quite famous musical enthusiasts showed unmistakable signs of impatience. But that did not prevent Strauss from being greeted with rapturous applause. I say again that it is not possible to withstand his irresistible domination.



RICHARD WAGNER



XXVI

RICHARD WAGNER

THE *Société des Grandes Auditions de France* did not honour me with an invitation to listen to the recent performance of *Parsifal* at the *Nouveau-Théâtre* under the director, Alfred Cortot. Alfred Cortot is the French conductor who has used to the best advantage the pantomime customary to German conductors. Like Nikisch—who, however, is Hungarian—he has a lock of hair, and that lock is in the highest degree arresting owing to the quivers of passion which agitate it on the slightest provocation. Sometimes it droops sadly and wearily in the tender passages, interposing a complete screen between Cortot and the orchestra. Then again it rears itself proudly in the martial passages. At such moments Cortot advances on the orchestra and aims a threatening baton, like a banderillero when he wants to irritate the bull. The members of the orchestra are as cool as Icelanders; they

have been there before. Cortot, like Weingartner, leans affectionately over the first violins, murmuring intimate secrets; he swoops round to the trombones, adjuring them with an eloquent gesture that might be translated: "Now my lads! Put some go into it! Try to be super-trombones!" and the obedient trombones conscientiously do their best to swallow the brass tubes.

It is only fair to add that Cortot understands the innermost secrets of Wagner and is himself a perfect musician. He is young, his love of music is quite disinterested; and these are good reasons enough for not being too hard on him for gestures that are more decorative than useful.

To return to the *Société des Grandes Auditions*, did it intend to punish me for my Wagnerian iconoclasm by depriving me of *Parsifal*? Did it fear a subversive attitude or a bombshell? I do not know, but I should prefer to think that these private performances are designed for people whose nobility or position in high society entitles them to attend such little entertainments with a well-bred indifference to what is played. The unimpeachable distinction of the name on the programme frees them from the need of

any other illumination and makes it possible to listen attentively to the latest scandal or to watch those pretty movements of the heads of women who are not listening to music. But let the *Société des Grandes Auditions* beware! They will turn Wagner's music into a fashionable at home. After all, that phase of Wagnerian art which originally imposed on his votaries costly pilgrimages and mysterious rites is irritating. I am well aware that this Religion of Art was one of Wagner's favourite ideas; and he was right, for such a formula is excellent for capturing and holding the imagination of an audience; but it has miscarried by becoming a kind of Religion of Luxury, excluding perforce many people who are richer in enthusiasm than in cash. The *Société des Grandes Auditions*, by carrying on these traditions of exclusiveness, seems to me doomed to end in that most detestable thing, the art of fashionable society. When Wagner was in a good humour he liked to maintain that he would never be so well understood as in France. Was he referring to aristocratic performances only? I do not think so. King Louis II of Bavaria was already annoying him enough with questions of arbitrary etiquette; and Wagner's proud sensitiveness

was too acute to miss the fact that true fame comes solely from the masses and not from a more or less gilded and exclusive public. It is to be feared that these performances, directed avowedly at the diffusion of Wagnerian art, may serve only to alienate the sympathy of the masses; a cunning trick to make it unpopular. I do not mean that the performances will hasten a final eclipse; for Wagner's art can never completely die. It will suffer that inevitable decay, the cruel brand of time on all beautiful things; yet noble ruins must remain, in the shadow of which our grandchildren will brood over the past splendour of this man who, had he been a little more human, would have been altogether great.

In *Parsifal*, the final effort of a genius which compels our homage, Wagner tried to drive this music on a looser rein and let it breathe more freely. We have no longer the distraught breathlessness that characterises Tristan's morbid passion or Isolde's wild screams of frenzy; nor yet the grandiloquent commentary on the inhumanity of Wotan. Nowhere in Wagner's music is a more serene beauty attained than in the prelude to the third act of *Parsifal* and in the entire Good Friday episode; although, it must be admitted

that Wagner's peculiar conception of human nature is also shown in the attitude of certain characters in this drama. Look at Amfortas, that melancholy Knight of the Grail, who whines like a shop girl and whimpers like a baby. Good heavens! A Knight of the Grail, a king's son, would plunge his spear into his own body rather than parade a guilty wound in doleful melodies for three acts! As for Kundry, that ancient rose of hell, she has furnished much copy for Wagnerian literature; and I confess I have but little affection for such a sentimental draggel-tail. Klingsor is the finest character in *Parsifal*: a quondam Knight of the Grail, sent packing from the Holy Place because of his too pronounced views on chastity. His bitter hatred is amazing; he knows the worth of men and scornfully weighs the strength of their vows of chastity in the balance. From this it is quite obvious that this crafty magician, this old gaol-bird, is not merely the only human character but the only moral character in this drama, in which the falsest moral and religious ideas are set forth, ideas of which the youthful Parsifal is the heroic and insipid champion.

Here in short is a Christian drama in which

nobody is willing to sacrifice himself, though sacrifice is one of the highest of the Christian virtues! If Parsifal recovers his miraculous spear, it is thanks to old Kundry, the only creature actually sacrificed in the story: a victim twice over, once to the diabolical intrigues of Klingsor and again to the sacred spleen of a Knight of the Grail. The atmosphere is certainly religious, but why have the incidental children's voices such sinister harmonies? Think for a moment of the childlike candour that would have been conveyed if the spirit of Palestrina had been able to dictate its expression.

The above remarks only apply to the poet whom we are accustomed to admire in Wagner and have nothing to do with the musical beauty of the opera, which is supreme. It is incomparable and bewildering, splendid and strong. *Parsifal* is one of the loveliest monuments of sound ever raised to the serene glory of music.



SIEGFRIED WAGNER



§ XVII §

SIEGFRIED WAGNER

SIEGFRIED WAGNER bears lightly the heavy burden of glory left him by his illustrious father. He does not seem even to be aware of it, such is the tranquil assurance of his precise, detached attitude. His likeness to his father is remarkable; but it is a copy which lacks the touch of genius of the original. In his youth apparently he was destined for architecture. We shall never know whether architecture lost very much when later he turned aside to music; nor is it certain that music gained very much either. All things considered, it is undoubtedly the part of a dutiful son to wish to carry on his father's tradition, but in such a case it is not as easy as taking over a haberdasher's shop. It is not a question of Siegfried's inability to grasp what was beyond him in his father's work, but the fact that he made the attempt implies an attitude of mind in which the most childish vanity is mingled with the desire to dedicate his work to the

honour of a beloved memory. On the other hand it was difficult to escape the seductive atmosphere of Bayreuth without endeavouring to drain the magician's cup; unfortunately, however, only the dregs of the magic potion remain, nor do they smell of anything but vinegar. These ideas occurred to me as I listened to fragments of Siegfried Wagner's three-act musical comedy, *Duc Wildfang*. It is decent music and nothing more; something like the task of a pupil who, had he studied under Richard Wagner, would not greatly have attracted the master's notice.

Siegfried Wagner, when giving the *Siegfried Idyll*— which, by the way, he conducts exceedingly well—would have perhaps been wise to listen to the gentle, persuasive voice of maternal affection which pervades this work. The Idyll would have urged him to pass through life freely and joyfully immune from the anxieties and disappointments of the pursuit of fame. It harped upon his name and endued it with a lasting radiance. Why has he sought new fields of fame which will always be equivocal and will leave him, when all is said and done, with only the title of the son of Richard Wagner, in my opinion his only enviable title?

The mind of another, however, is a dark forest in which we must step warily. Siegfried Wagner has no doubt better reasons than those by which I try to explain him. He seemed to me inferior as a conductor to those generally exported from Germany. Among others, Weingartner has more understanding, Nikisch is more decorative. Why too is he so finicking in his rendering of Beethoven's *Symphony in A*, as to weaken it and make it even rather absurd?


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CÉSAR FRANCK  
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3 XVIII 6

CÉSAR FRANCK

CÉSAR FRANCK'S *Béatitudes* does not require any staging; it is pure music; and, moreover, it is consistently beautiful music. César Franck was single minded. To have found a beautiful harmony sufficed to make his day happy. A rather closer examination of the verses of the *Béatitudes* reveals such a collection of images and truisms as to daunt the most resolute man alive. It required the sane and unruffled genius of César Franck smilingly to grapple with it all like a kindly apostle preaching the gospel and saying:

"Be not troubled—God will recognise his own."

Yet a strange impression is produced by the characteristic melodiousness of César Franck interpreting verses which would disgrace a penny whistle. Meanwhile, there has been much discussion of the genius of César Franck, but never a word about his unique quality, simplicity. Un-

happy and misunderstood as he was, he still had the heart of a child, so fundamentally good that he could, without a trace of bitterness, contemplate the wickedness of mankind and the perversity of things.

It was thus that he wrote those too facilely dramatic choruses, those persistently and wearisomely monotonous elaborations, which seem sometimes to mar the beauty of the *Béatitudes*, with that candour and confidence which enlist our admiration when he is face to face with music, before which he kneels murmuring the most profoundly human prayer ever uttered by a mortal soul. He never thinks evil or suspects boredom. There is none of the trickery so flagrant when Wagner performs a sentimental or orchestral pirouette by which he stimulates the attention of an audience wearied sometimes by a too continuous breathing of a rarefied atmosphere.

César Franck is always a worshipper of music, and you can take it or leave it; no power on earth can induce him to interrupt a period which he considers just and necessary; however long it is, it must be gone through. This is the hall-mark of an imagination so selfless as to check its very

sobs unless it has first tested their genuineness.

In this César Franck is allied to the great masters for whom tones have an exact meaning within their own sphere; they use them with precision and without ever exacting from them more than is explicit in them. Here lies all the difference between the impure art of Wagner, with its peculiar beauty and seduction, and the art of Franck, which renders service to music without expecting any return. What he takes from life he restores to art with a modesty which is almost selfless. When Wagner takes from life he conquers it, places his foot on its neck, and forces it to shriek the name of Wagner louder than the trumpets of Fame. I should have liked to have portrayed César Franck more precisely in order that each reader might have in his mind a clear picture of him. Amid all our preoccupations and distractions we ought to think of the great musicians; and, still more, to make others think of them.

Good Friday seemed to me the right day on which to pay homage to one of the greatest of them; for the idea of sacrifice which calls for our homage on this sacred day is inherent also in his greatness.

NEGLECT

IX

NEGLECT

THE dead are really sometimes too diffident and are willing to wait too long for the sad meed of posthumous fame.

To lift the veil from death tactful hands are needed. It usually happens however that the hands which exhume are clumsy and suspicious; they cast the poor funeral flowers into oblivion under the influence of a base and unavowed egoism. The blaze of glory that surrounds Bach really obscures Händel for us. His oratorios, more numerous than the sands of the sea, are unknown to us and, like the sands, contain more pebbles than pearls; it is however certain that they would repay patient and discriminating study.

Another master now quite forgotten is Alessandro Scarlatti, the founder of the Neapolitan school, who composed a positively amazing number and variety of works. The statement seems incredible that Scarlatti, born in 1659, had writ-

ten by 1715 more than 106 operas—not to mention all kinds of other musical compositions. Good heavens! How gifted the man must have been; and how could he find time to live? We know a *Passion According to St. John* by him, a little masterpiece of primitive grace, in which the choruses seem to be written in pale gold like the halos which set off so delicately the virgin faces seen in the frescoes of his period. This music is much less fatiguing to listen to than *Das Rheingold*, and the hushed emotion exhaled from it is gently consoling. I cannot imagine how he found time to have a son and to make a distinguished harpsichord player of him. He is still appreciated to-day under the name of Domenico Scarlatti.

There are many others, but do not be afraid: I do not propose to make a contribution to the history of music. I merely want to suggest that perhaps it is wrong always to play the same things, which might make quite decent people think that music was only born yesterday; whereas it has a past whose ashes are worth stirring, for within them lingers that unquenchable flame to which the present will always owe something of its radiance.



GRIEG



GRIEG

GRIEG is the Scandinavian composer who was scarcely kind to France at the time of the Dreyfus Case. In a letter answering M. Colonne's invitation to come and conduct his orchestra, Grieg declared vigorously that never again would he set foot in a country which understood freedom so ill. Consequently France had to get on without Grieg. But, apparently, Grieg could not get on without France, because to-day he is quite willing to ignore his quarrel and the frontiers, in order to conduct a French orchestra which was once the object of his Scandinavian contempt. Besides, the Dreyfus Case is nearly dead and Grieg is almost sixty, an age when passions ought naturally to be appeased and give place to the calm wisdom of the sage who contemplates the course of events as a spectator who has weighed and appraised their irresistible march. Even though one is a Scandinavian one

is human. It is hard to deny oneself the welcome which Paris extends so charmingly to foreigners, many of whom do not equal Grieg in their appeal to the artistic ear.

At first I thought that I could only give colour impressions of Grieg's music! To begin with, the number of Norwegians who usually haunt the Colonne Concerts was tripled; we had never before been privileged to see so much red hair, or such extravagant hats—for the fashions in Christiania seem to me rather behind the times. Then the concert opened with a double turn: the performance of an overture called *Autumn* and the ejection of a crowd of Grieg's admirers, who at the bidding of a police-constable, a slave to duty rather than to music, were sent to cool their enthusiasm on the banks of the Seine. Was a counter-demonstration feared?

It is not for me to say, but Grieg was in fact for a time the object of the most unappreciative comments; nor could I listen to the music just then, for I was busily engaged in coming to terms with several stern and splendid policemen.

At last I saw Grieg. From in front he looks like a genial photographer; from behind his way of doing his hair makes him look like the plants

called sunflowers, dear to parrots and the gardens that decorate small country stations. Despite his age, he is lean and vivacious and conducts the orchestra with care and vigour, stressing all the lights and shades and apportioning the expression with unflagging attention.

It is a pity that Grieg's visit to Paris has taught us nothing new about his art; but he is an exquisite musician when he interprets the folk music of his country, although far from equaling Balakirev and Rimsky-Korsakov in the use they make of Russian folk music. Apart from this, he is no more than a clever musician, more concerned with effects than with genuine art. Apparently his real inspiration was a young man of his own age, Richard Nordruck, a born genius who would have been a great musician had he not died in his twenty-fourth year. His death was a twofold misfortune, since it robbed Norway of a great man and Grieg of a friendly influence which would certainly have prevented him from going astray.

For the rest, Grieg sets out, like Solness in *The Master Builder*, one of the late Ibsen plays, "to build homes for human beings. Cosy, happy homes. . . ."

I found no trace of this beautiful ideal in the music Grieg gave to us yesterday. Perhaps because as yet we know nothing of his later works. These may be Ibsen's "cosy homes"! Anyhow, Grieg did not give us the pleasure of entering them. The triumphant welcome he received yesterday may compensate him for his trouble in coming to France. Let our most heartfelt wish be that in the future he may deem us worthy of finding ourselves, if not "cosy," at least "happy" through his music.


VINCENT D'INDY



XXI

VINCENT D'INDY

L'ÉTRANGER is what dogmatic people call an example of pure and lofty art, but in my humble opinion it is more than that.

It is the working out of formulas which are admittedly pure and lofty, but which have the coldness, blueness, delicacy, and hardness of steel. Beautiful music is there, but it is, as it were, cloaked; and the mastery is so amazing that one hardly ventures to feel anything so incongruous as an emotion.

Say what you will, Wagner's influence on Vincent d'Indy was never really profound; Wagner was a strolling player on the heroic plane and could never be linked to so strict an artist as d'Indy. If *Fervaal* owes something to the influence of the Wagnerian tradition, it is protected from it by its conscientious scorn of the grandiloquent hysteria which ravages the Wagnerian heroes.

I am well aware that Vincent d'Indy will be reproached with having freed himself and with having lost his love for the hearth and home of the *leit-motif*—the delight of old Wagnerians whose steps are guided by special signposts.

Why did he not free himself entirely from the craving to explain everything, to emphasise everything, which sometimes burdens the finest scenes in *L'Étranger*?

What is the object of so much music for an excise officer, an incidental character with whose anxiety to oppose the overflowing humanity of "the Stranger" I sympathise, but who I could wish were more of a good fellow, more truly one of those ordinary human beings who think of nothing but their own wretched skins?

The dramatic action of *L'Étranger* is not, in spite of its simplicity, a mere chronicle of events. The action takes place in a small fishing village by the sea. A man has recently come to live in this village; he is called "the Stranger" for want of a better name; his personality is repellent and he neither makes friends with nor speaks to anyone; his cap is adorned with an emerald which naturally wins him the reputation of a sorcerer. He tries to be helpful and kindly, giving his share

of fish to those who have caught nothing, and endeavours to set free an unfortunate man who is being dragged to prison; but the authorities have no love for wearers of symbols—nor have the fishermen.

In two simple phrases Vincent d'Indy has conveyed the character of the Stranger with great clarity. He is a Christian hero, in direct lineal descent from the martyrs who performed on earth tasks of charity imposed on them by God. The Stranger is, then, the faithful servant whom the Master decides to tempt through the love of a woman. He weakens and death alone can redeem him.

No modern music has expressed profound piety and Christian charity so well. Indeed, it is d'Indy's deep conviction which makes these two phrases so entirely successful; they light up the profound meaning of the drama better than any other sort of symphonic commentary.

A young girl, Vita, is attracted by the mystery and the brooding melancholy of this man; she has a passion for the sea to which she always confides her griefs and hopes. She is, however, betrothed to André, the handsome excise officer, who in a domestic scene proves himself a self-

satisfied egoist. He is an official who is incapable of understanding that a girl can dream of anything but a handsome excise officer.

In a scene where Vita and the Stranger meet, the plot reaches its climax. Vita confesses her love. Since the arrival of the Stranger she has ceased to confide in the sea. Deeply moved, the Stranger inadvertently reveals his sad secret:

"Farewell, Vita. All happiness be thine. Tomorrow I go hence. For I love thee, I love thee, yes, I love thee passionately and well thou knowest it."

Vita is young and she is betrothed to another. The Stranger, by uttering words of love, has lost the purity of heart which was his strength; for moral solitude is necessary to the mission of redemption to which he is vowed. To devote himself to all forbids his devoting himself to one. It is no fun to work miracles every day. After all, the Stranger is old; and this purely human weakness is rather welcome in so superhuman a character.

He has for one moment forgotten his mission and is henceforth debarred from his task of charity. He gives Vita the now useless emerald and bids her an eternal farewell. Vita, weeping

bitterly, throws the accursed emerald, the cause of her unhappiness, into the restless sea whence mysterious voices arise. The sea closes over the gem with a wild joy in every wave at having recaptured the talisman which had been wont to calm its unwilling waters. A storm arises; a vessel is in distress. As might be expected the honest fishermen of the first act do not dare to go to its aid.

André, the handsome excise officer, takes advantage of the general confusion to come and show Vita his new stripe and to offer her a beautiful silver bracelet. He goes too far in his egoism and Vita, by her silence, shows him how unwelcome his attentions are. He goes away unabashed. The Stranger arrives recalled by the danger, demands a small boat, and is about to put off alone since no one is willing to share the peril. Vita darts forward and, breaking into one of the most beautiful melodies ever inspired by love, joins the Stranger. They embark and vanish amid the fury of the waves which they no longer have the power to calm. An old sailor follows their struggle with his eyes. Suddenly the rope holding them to the shore breaks. The old sailor takes off his cap and solemnly pronounces the words of

the *De Profundis*. These two souls have found peace in death, the only refuge for their hopeless love.

Let anyone who will look for mysterious symbolism in this plot. I prefer to see a simple human story which d'Indy has only expressed symbolically to make more absolute the eternal divorce of Beauty from the mob.

Without pausing to consider questions of technique, I want to do honour to the spirit of goodness hovering over this work, to the effort that avoids all complications, and especially to the unshrinking boldness of Vincent d'Indy in his lofty aim. If I complained just now of too much music, it was because I thought that here and there it marred the perfect balance which distinguishes so many pages of *L'Étranger* with unforgettable beauty. This work is an admirable lesson to those who believe in the crude, imported style which consists in crushing music under cartloads of realism.

The *Théâtre de la Monnaie* and its directors are much to be congratulated on producing *L'Étranger* with an artistic care worthy of the highest praise. Possibly the staging might have received more careful attention. We ought how-

ever to be grateful for an enterprise which, even in these days, remains courageous.

I have nothing but praise for Sylvain Dupuis and his orchestra for that sympathetic understanding which is so precious to a musician. M. Albert and Mlle. Friché contributed to the triumph with which the name of the composer was received. Indeed, everyone displayed a touching enthusiasm and I see no reason why we should not congratulate the city of Brussels.



RICHTER



XXII

RICHTER

IT is not for me to say precisely in what the superiority of Anglo-Saxons consists, but, amongst other things, they have Covent Garden. This theatre possesses the peculiar characteristic of making music seem to be at home there. More attention is given to perfect acoustics than to sumptuous decorations, and the orchestra is numerous and well disciplined. Besides all this, André Messager assumes the artistic responsibilities with the perfect and unerring taste which everyone expects from him. You see how astonishing all this is, for they actually think that a musician can manage an opera house successfully! They really must be mad—or else they are systematic! In any case I shall institute no comparisons; they would establish too completely the poverty of our own methods, and our national pride might suffer. Only let us avoid false notes in blowing the trumpet of Fame on behalf of the

glory of our own Opera; or, at all events, let us use a mute.

Recently I attended the performances of *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*. It seems to me impossible to achieve greater perfection. Although the scenery and certain lighting effects might be open to criticism, the artistic care shown throughout compels our admiration.

Richter* conducted the first performance of *The Ring* at Bayreuth in 1876. At that time his hair and beard were red-gold; now his hair has gone, but behind his gold spectacles his eyes still flash magnificently. They are the eyes of a prophet; and he is in fact a prophet, which he only ceases to be, at least as far as the Wagnerian cult is concerned, through Mme. Cosima Wagner's decision to replace him by her estimable but mediocre son, Siegfried Wagner.

It was a sound arrangement from the point of view of domestic economy, but deplorable for the fame of Wagner. Such a man as Wagner

* Hans Richter, born Raab, Hungary, 1843, died Bayreuth, 1916; the foremost of Wagnerian conductors; presided over the London Philharmonic Concerts in 1879 and over the Hallé concerts in Manchester from 1900.

needs men like Richter, Levy * or Mottl—they are part of the splendid adventure which, at a given stage, brought Wagner into touch with a king—not to mention Liszt, whom he conscientiously plagiarised and who met him with nothing but a kindly smile of acquiescence.

There was something miraculous in Wagner, and his impunity as a despot almost excused his imperturbable vanity.

If Richter looks like a prophet, when he conducts the orchestra he is Almighty God; and you may be sure that God Himself would have asked Richter for some hints before embarking on such an adventure.

While his right hand, armed with a small unpretentious baton, secures the precision of the rhythm, his left hand, multiplied a hundred-fold, directs the performance of each individual. This left hand is "undulating and diverse," its suppleness is unbelievable! Then, when it seems that there is really no possibility of attaining a greater wealth of sound, up go his two arms, and

* Hermann Levi (Levy), born Giessen, 1839, died Munich, 1900; was conductor at Carlsruhe and Munich; conducted the first performance of *Parsifal* at Bayreuth.

the orchestra leaps through the music with so furious an onset as to sweep the most stubborn indifference before it like a straw. Yet all this pantomime is unobtrusive and never distracts the attention unpleasantly or comes between the music and the audience.

I tried in vain to meet this marvellous man. He is a sage who shrinks in wild alarm from interviews. I caught sight of him for a moment as he rehearsed Fafner, the unfortunate dragon on whom that heroic little simpleton, Siegfried, was just about to test the virtue of his sword. It is easy to understand my emotion as I watched the conscientious old man bent over the piano while he performed the duties of a mere producer. Could I interrupt so excellent a man on the futile pretext of extracting confidences from him? Would it not be as outrageous as a presumptuous offer suddenly to extract one of his teeth?

You may be sure that the German theatres had been ransacked to discover singers worthy of such a performance. I wish I could mention them all. For to-day, I will refer only to Van Dyck, who interpreted the ironic fantasy of Loki in *Das Rheingold*, and the impassioned poetry of

Siegmond in *Die Walküre*. M. Lieban in his astonishing performance of the sly and obsequious dwarf, Mime, sang marvellously. These two men are great artists.

Mlle. Zimmermann almost made us forget Mme. Caron, who used to invest the rôle of Sieglinde with such poignant charm. As for the three Rhine maidens, I only wish you could have heard them.

An English audience listens with almost rapt attention. If any boredom is felt there is no sign of it. On the other hand the theatre is plunged in darkness throughout the acts, so that it is possible to sleep in perfect safety. Following the strict Wagnerian tradition, there was no applause until the end of each act, when Richter went off contentedly, oblivious of it and impatient, maybe, to find recuperation in a glass of beer.



BERLIOZ



XXIII

BERLIOZ

BERLIOZ never had any luck. He suffered from the inadequacy of the orchestras and the intellects of his time. To-day, however, the inventive genius of M. Gunsbourg, supported by the *Société des Grandes Auditions Musicales de France*, has undertaken to revive and to augment Berlioz's posthumous glory by adapting *The Damnation of Faust* to the stage.

Without condemning the policy of such an adaptation we may at least urge the undeniable fact that, since Berlioz died without leaving any precise views on its suitability, it is æsthetically debatable. Besides this, to step into a dead man's shoes without a specific invitation seems to me a deliberate flouting of the respect which we usually show to the dead. But here again M. Gunsbourg's unwavering confidence in his own genius gives him a natural right to treat Berlioz as a brother, and to carry out instructions which

have probably come to him from beyond the grave.

In doing this M. Gunsbourg carries on the unfortunate tradition which requires masterpieces to breed a teeming horde of commentators, adapters, and manipulators, whose representatives spring into existence without any further definite function than that of befogging with pompous words and epithets the said unhappy masterpieces.

Berlioz, alas, is not the only victim! There is the smile of the famous *Gioconda*, which a strange perversity has labelled for all time mysterious. There is Beethoven's *Choral Symphony* which has been subjected to such transcendental interpretations, that even such a powerful and straight-forward work as this has become a universal nightmare. There is the whole work of Wagner, which needed all its solidity to withstand the industrious enthusiasm of its editors.

Such practices result in a kind of special literature and even in a recognised profession in which success is certain provided the beaten track is never left, since its members being engaged in criticising others are bound to be immune from the danger of mutual criticism. In some respects

it is a laudable profession; in others it seems to have a certain futility, though a greater or less degree of cleverness may win fame for its members.

So far, Berlioz had escaped any such intrusion; only Jullien, in an admirably documented book, had piously recorded the calvary of his fame, and Fantin-Latour had interpreted his music in lithographic dreams. Incidentally, the work of Berlioz, through his pre-occupation with colour and incident, became at once a subject for artists; one might even say without irony that Berlioz has always been the favourite musician of those who do not know much about music. Other musicians are alarmed at the liberties he takes with harmony—they even call them blunders—and his “Go-to-the-devil!” style. Are these the reasons which make his influence on modern music negligible and leave his own, in a way, unique? In France, with the exception of Gustave Charpentier, I can hardly find a trace of his influence, and even there only in a superficial sense, since Charpentier’s art is undoubtedly individual as far as concerns anything that is fundamental in his music.

This brings me to the fact that Berlioz was

never, properly speaking, a stage-musician. Despite the real beauties of *Les Troyens*, a lyrical tragedy in two parts, faulty proportions make its performance difficult and produce an almost monotonous, not to say wearisome, effect. For the rest, Berlioz has nothing new to offer in this work. He echoes Gluck, whom he passionately admired, and Meyerbeer, whom he religiously hated. We must not seek Berlioz here. We must seek him in his pure symphonic music or in his *Enfance du Christ*, which is perhaps his masterpiece; nor must we forget the *Symphonie Fantastique* and the music of his *Romeo and Juliet*.

But M. Gunsbourg was on the watch and said: "My dear Berlioz, you know nothing about it! If you have never succeeded on the stage, it is because, unfortunately, I was not at hand to help you with my experience. Now you are dead, and we can put everything to rights. Listen! You composed a dramatic legend, *The Damnation of Faust*. It is not bad, but it is not alive! And what interest can you expect people to take in your *Marche Hongroise* if they do not see soldiers exercising at the back of the stage? As for your *Ballet des Sylphes*, it is most charming music.

But you will never make me believe that a mere symphony orchestra can ever take the place of an attractive ballet dancer! Your *Course à l'Abîme* is terrifying, my dear fellow! But you wait and see; I will make it poignant and ghastly. I will turn aside the course of rivers in order to make natural waterfalls; I will make a rain of real blood supplied by the slaughter-houses; the horses of Faust and Mephistopheles shall trample upon real corpses. Fortunately, too, you won't be able to interfere! You were so eccentric when you were alive that your presence could only spoil the whole thing."

So saying, M. Gunsbourg set to work and adapted frantically. As he made his way through *Faust* he was even more convinced that this "confounded Berlioz" knew nothing whatever about it. "Too much music," he grumbled, and "what facility!" but "it is disconnected, I must have recitatives. It is a pity that he is really dead, but it can't be helped! We must get along without him." And M. Gunsbourg got along without him; he added recitatives and altered the order of the scenes. Everything, or nearly everything, gave him an excuse for ballets and supers, re-

sulting in a performance in which the tricks of the pantomime were combined with the attractions of the *Folies-Bergère*.

At Monte Carlo it might have succeeded. People do not go there just to listen to beautiful music, which has about as much importance for them as a fine afternoon. The delightful adventurers who adorn that resort are not very particular, and the charming cosmopolitan young ladies only regard music as an unobtrusive and useful accompaniment to their smiles.

Something better was essential for Paris; so the *Société des Grandes Auditions*, for whose well-known eclecticism no sacrifice is too great, intervened. In this case, it seems to me, they sacrificed everything, even the most elementary good taste. Their desire to give France lessons in the best music has, I fear, carried them beyond all bounds; but the fashionable set, owing to a lack of interest, may be more easily deceived than others. Besides that, there were admirable singers such as M. Renaud, perhaps the only artist who, by his tact and good taste, could make the Mephistopheles, conceived by the fancy of M. Gunsbourg, tolerable. M. Alvarez and Mme. Calvé are too celebrated not to be perfect, even

in *Faust*. But, good Heavens! what marionettes they had to be!

Finally, there are two beings who would have been amazed at the performance. In the first place Faust, though he did meet his old friend M. Colonne, would have been astonished at finding himself filling the passages in which he had been accustomed to keep still with a pantomime which he would be at a loss to understand. In the second place the Spirit of Music would have recoiled from the consciousness of often being *de trop* or even utterly unnecessary. She is so little at home on the stage, poor thing, that she blushes at the sound of her own voice and at the awkward figure she cuts in the staging imposed on her by M. Gunsbourg.

For the future, M. Gunsbourg may sleep in peace. His bust will face that of Berlioz in the gardens at Monte Carlo; he will be much more at home there, and Berlioz will certainly have no reason to complain of his proximity.



GOUNOD





XXIV

GOUNOD

MANY unbiassed people—that is to say, people who are not musicians—wonder why the Opera persists in giving Gounod's *Faust*. There are several reasons, the chief being that Gounod's art represents a phase of French æsthetic development. Whether we like it or not, such things are not forgotten.

As to *Faust*, eminent writers on music have reproached Gounod with travesty of Goethe's conception; but the same eminent writers never think of noticing that Wagner may have misrepresented the character of Tannhäuser, who in the legend, is not at all the repentant little scapegrace Wagner makes him out to be, nor did his staff, scorched by the memory of Venus, ever flower again. Gounod is a Frenchman and may therefore be forgiven; but in the case of Wagner, since he and Tannhäuser were both Germans, it is inexcusable.

We love so many things in France that we do not really love music. Yet there are very clever people who, by dint of hearing all kinds of music every day, profess to be musicians. But they never write music—they encourage others. That is generally how a school is started. You must not mention Gounod to them; they would look scornfully down on you from among their Olympians, whose most delightful quality is that they are interchangeable. Gounod did not belong to any school. The masses are in much the same position. Their reply to the countless artistic invitations is a return to the familiar, which is not always in the best taste. They may oscillate blindly between *Père la Victoire* and *Die Walküre*, but there it is. The people who so oddly constitute the elect may loudly trumpet famous or respectable names, but the fashion changes as with hats. It is no use; educators may waste their breath, but the great vague heart of the people refuses to be caught; art continues to blow where it listeth, and the Opera persists in giving *Faust*.

We must make the best of it, however, and admit that art is of absolutely no use to the masses; it does not even express the mind of the *élite* who are often more stupid than the masses. It is the

expression of beauty in full flower, which blossoms at its appointed time at the bidding of a mysterious destiny. One can no more compel the masses to love beauty than one can decently ask them to stand on their heads. In passing, it is noteworthy that the spontaneous effect of Berlioz on the masses is practically invariable.

If Gounod's influence is questionable, Wagner's is obvious, though, since it never extends beyond the specialists, it is in fact incomplete. We are bound to admit that nothing was ever more dreary than the neo-Wagnerian school in which the French genius has lost its way among the sham Wotans in Hessian boots and the Tristans in velvet jackets.

Although Gounod may lack the sweeping harmony that we could wish for him, he deserves our praise for having evaded the domination of the genius of Wagner, whose peculiarly German ideal was not clearly realised in his attempt at a fusion of the arts. It has become hardly more than a formula for the advancement of literature.

Gounod, with all his faults, is needed. To begin with, he is cultured; he knows Palestrina and draws upon Bach. His respect for tradition is

discriminating enough for him not to be swept away by Gluck, another rather indeterminate foreign influence. It is rather Mozart for whom he asks the affection of young people, which is a proof of great disinterestedness, for he never drew inspiration from him. His relations with Mendelssohn were more obvious, since it is to him that he owes his method, so convenient when the flow of inspiration fails, of developing the melody step by step. Generally speaking, Mendelssohn's influence was perhaps more direct than that of Schumann. Bizet he ignores, and that is a very good thing. Bizet, unfortunately, died too soon, and, although he left a masterpiece, the development of French music was not affected. French music is still in the position of a pretty widow who, having no one by her side strong enough to direct her, falls, to her cost, into alien arms. It is undeniable that certain unions are necessary in art, but we should at least use some discretion; to choose the loudest shouter is not necessarily to choose the finest man. These unions are too often merely self-interested and little more than a means of reviving a waning fame. Like cautious marriages, they turn out badly. Let us magnanimously accept such art as

is imported into France, only let us not be blinded or fall into ecstasies over penny whistles. Let us make up our minds that this valuation will not be reciprocated; on the contrary, our good nature induces that stern and discourteous attitude in foreigners, of which we can hardly complain since we have challenged it. To conclude these notes which are too brief for the ideas with which they deal and which are sometimes depreciatory of Gounod, let us, without being over-dogmatic, take the opportunity of rendering our homage to him. Let it be stated once again that a name lives in the memory of men for various though not necessarily weighty reasons. One of the best means of achieving this is to stir the emotions of the majority of one's contemporaries. Of that no one will deny Gounod made generous use.



AN OPEN LETTER TO
THE CHEVALIER W. GLUCK



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AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CHEVALIER
W. GLUCK

SIR,—Shall I write to you or shall I summon your spirit? My letter would probably not reach you; and it is doubtful whether you would consent to leave the abode of the blessed to come and talk to me about the fate of an art in which you excelled to such a degree that you might reasonably expect to have your name omitted from interminable discussions on the subject. I shall, therefore, employ both and endow you with an imaginary life which allows me a certain freedom. You will, I hope, pardon me for not admiring your work; I shall not on that account forget the respect due to so famous a man.

You were in fact a court musician. Royal hands turned the pages of your manuscripts and you enjoyed the approbation of painted smiles. There was a great to-do about you and a man called Piccini who composed over sixty operas.

You were the victim of the universal law that quantity shall take the place of quality, and that Italians shall at all times glut the music market. The said Piccini has been so completely forgotten that he has had to take the name of Puccini in order to get himself performed at the *Opéra Comique*. However, discussions between cultured priests and dogmatic encyclopædists can hardly have affected you; both sides spoke of music with an incompetence that you would find as common to-day. It is true that you showed your independence by conducting the first performance of *Iphigenia in Aulis* with your nightcap instead of your wig on your head, but it was even more important for you to please your king and queen. You must accept the fact that such illustrious associations have lent to your music an almost uniformly pompous bearing. When your characters fall in love, they do so with majestic dignity; even suffering makes a preliminary obeisance. Is it more elegant to please King Louis XIV than to please society under the Third Republic? That is a question which your status as a dead man prevents me from deciding in the affirmative.

Your art was essentially in the grand ceremo-

nious style. Common people only participated at a distance. They were used to seeing others pass by who were more fortunate and more comfortable than themselves. You represented to them, as it were, a wall behind which something was happening.

We have changed all that, my dear Chevalier, for we have a social sense and we endeavour to reach the heart of the masses. We are not succeeding any better and it does not make us any prouder of ourselves! You have no idea how hard it is for us to found a People's Opera.

In spite of the "luxurious" aspect of your art, it has had considerable influence on French music. You can be traced in Spontini, Lesueur, Méhul, and others; you embody the Wagnerian formulas in embryo, which is intolerable; you will see why in a moment. Between ourselves, your words and music harmonise badly; in any case, you make the French language one of accentuation, whereas it is a language of inflection. I know you are a German. Rameau, who helped to form your genius, gives examples of fine and vigorous declamation which ought to have been more useful to you—I say nothing about the musician in Rameau, because I do not

wish to be offensive to you. It is owing to you that the action of the drama now dominates the music. Is that really desirable? All things considered, I prefer Mozart to you; the splendid fellow entirely ignores you and thinks of nothing but music. To attain that domination you took Greek subjects, which accounts for the solemn nonsense that is talked about the alleged connection between your music and Greek art.

Rameau was infinitely more Greek than you. Do not fly into a passion—I shall soon be leaving you. Moreover, Rameau was lyrical, which suited us from all points of view; we had only to remain lyrical and had no need to wait for a century of music to revive that quality in us.

Through knowing you, French music enjoyed the somewhat unlooked-for blessing of falling into the arms of Wagner; I like to think that, but for you, not only would this not have happened, but that French music would not have asked its way so often of people who were only too ready to lead it astray.

In conclusion, you have benefited by the many false interpretations given to the word "classic"; but to have invented a purring accompaniment to drama, sacrificing any attempt at music, does

AN OPEN LETTER

not entitle you to be called a "classic." Rameau has more serious claims to such a title.

I am sorry, because of Mme. Caron's performance, that you are dead. She presented your Iphigenia as a type of purity infinitely more Greek than any you ever conceived. There was not an attitude or a gesture which was not of supreme beauty.

All the deep emotion you failed to embody in this character was discovered by Mme. Caron. Her every step was music. Could you have seen how she went to sit by the sacred tree before the sacrifice in the third act, you would have wept, so poignant a grief was there in that simple movement.

And when, at the end of the opera, you unite the tender Iphigenia and the faithful Pylades in the bonds of Hymen, Mme. Caron's face was so radiantly transfigured that one forgot the commonplace banality of this climax in admiration of her violet eyes; a colour, as you know, especially dear to all who dream vaguely of Greek beauty.

In this woman your music is idealised; it is no longer labelled with a period; for, by a gift, which makes us believe in the survival of the

ancient gods, hers is the soul of tragedy which raises the dark veil from the past and calls to life again those dead cities where the worship of Beauty was harmoniously wedded to the worship of Art.

M. Cossira would have delighted you with the charm of his voice, and M. Dufrane by the convincing way in which he roared the fury of Orestes. I did not much care for the Scythian interlude in the first act, which suggests at once the Russian moujik and the antics of a party of cabmen. Your warlike interludes, allow me to say, are most difficult to perform; for neither the music nor the rhythm gives any very precise guide. You may rest assured that everywhere else M. Carré has found the proper setting.

And with this, my dear Chevalier,

I have the honour to remain,

Your very humble servant,

CLAUDE DEBUSSY.

NOTES

Page 9. GIACOMO MEYERBEER, born Berlin, 1791; died Paris, 1864; composer of the operas, *Robert le Diable*, *Les Huguenots*, *Le Prophète*, etc.

SIGISMUND THALBERG, born Geneva, 1812; died 1871. Although this composer and artist had a great vogue in his time and exercised some influence on other composers, his works are now practically forgotten.

ERNEST LOUIS ÉTIENNE REY, born Marseilles, 1823; died 1909; known under the name of Reyer, which he considered more suitable to a musical career, as the composer of the operas, *Sigurd*, *Salammbô*, etc.

PAUL DUKAS, born Paris, 1865; the composer of *Ariane et Barbe-bleue*, etc.

PIERRE LALO, born 1866; composer and musical critic of *Le Temps*.

Page 18. *Prix de Rome*. *L'École nationale et spéciale des beaux-arts*, under the direction of the *Bureau de l'enseignement*, gives instruction in the arts and holds competitions, among which is that for the *Prix de Rome*. The final award is made by the judges in all sections of the Institute (*L'Académie des beaux-arts*) acting together. This award entitles the holder to a period of free travel and residence at the Académie de France in the Villa Medici at Rome. The foundation of the Académie

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in 1666 has been variously attributed to Poussin, Le Brun, or Charles Errard. It was for pupils capable of profiting thereby to continue their studies in Italy. The competition for the *Prix de Rome* was established by decree in 1871.

Page 20. WILLIAM BOUGUEREAU, the French painter, born and died at La Rochelle, 1825-1905.

JULES MASSENET, composer of *Le Cid*, *Manon*, *Thaïs*, *La Navarraise*, *Werther*, etc.; born Saint-Étienne, 1842; died Paris, 1912.

Page 22. CHARLES LAMOUREUX, the founder of the celebrated Paris concerts bearing his name, born Bordeaux, 1834; died Paris, 1899. His son-in-law, Camille Chevillard, became his assistant and continued the concerts after Lamoureux's death.

Page 24. CHARLES CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS, composer of the operas *Samson et Dalila*, *Les Barbares*. *La Danse Macabre*, etc.; born Paris, 1835.

LOUIS GALLET, born Valence, Drôme, 1835; died 1898; was a well-known writer of libretti. Among his best-known works are *Le Cid*, *Thaïs*, *L'Attaque du Moulain*, etc.

VICTORIEN SARDOU, the French dramatic writer, born Paris, 1831; died 1908. Among his best-known works are *Madame Sans-Gêne*, *La Tosca*, *Les Pattes-de-Mouche*.

Page 27. LOUIS NICOLAS CABAT, the French landscape painter, born and died Paris, 1812-1893,

was one of the founders of the modern school of landscape painting.

ERNEST HÉBERT, French painter of historical subjects and portraits, born and died Grenoble, 1817-1908.

Page 53. PAUL FELIX WEINGARTNER, conductor and composer, was born Zara, Dalmatia, 1863.

RICHARD STRAUSS, composer of *Salome*, *Elektra*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, etc., was born Munich, 1864.

FELIX MOTTL, the conductor, born Unter St. Veit, near Vienna, 1856; died 1911; conducted the Vienna Wagner Society, and in 1876 assisted in staging *The Ring* at Bayreuth.

Page 55. GIOVANNI PIERLUIGI (PALESTRINA), the celebrated Italian composer of church music, born Palestrina, 1524; died 1594.

TOMASO LUDOVICO DA VITTORIA, born probably at Airla about 1540, died probably at Madrid about 1608; ranked as a composer of church music second only to Palestrina.

ORLANDUS LASSUS (DI LASSO), born about 1520; died Munich, 1594; was the last great composer of the early Netherland School, ranking, as far as his *Penitential Psalms* are concerned, with Palestrina.

Page 63. EDOUARD VICTOR ANTONINE LALO, born Lille, 1823; died Paris, 1892. Among his best-known works are *Le Roi d'Ys*, *La Symphonie Espagnole*, and *Namouna*.

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Page 69. ARTHUR NIKISCH, born 1855 on Baron Sina's estate in Hungary; died 1922.

Page 71. SCHUBERT's *Unfinished Symphony*, the eighth of his ten Symphonies in B minor, and the two movements of which are among his posthumous works.

Le Cirque d'Été, where the Lamboureux Concerts take place.

Page 79. PAUL DELMET, writer of ballad music, born and died in Paris, 1862-1904.

Page 93. HECTOR BERLIOZ, born Côte-Saint-André, Isère, 1803; died Paris, 1869; developed the resources of the orchestra to an enormous extent, and was the first to employ large masses of musicians and singers to produce big tonal effects. Among his best-known works are *Benvenuto Cellini* and *La Damnation de Faust*.

Page 97. CHARLES BORDES, born Vouvray-sur-Loire, 1863; died 1909; founded the now world-famous choir, *Les Chanteurs de St. Gervais*, in 1890 while organist at the Paris church of that name. In 1894 he founded with Guilmant and d'Indy the *Schola Cantorum*, whose object was to raise the standard of music in French churches by a return to plain-song, the old masters, etc.

Page 98. JEAN PHILIPPE RAMEAU, born Dijon, 1683; died 1768; wrote a number of works on the

theory of music; among his best-known compositions are *Hyppolite et Aricie*, *Castor et Pollux*, *Le Temple de la Gloire*.

CHRISTOPHE WILLIBALD VON GLUCK, born Weidenwang in the Upper Palatinate, 1714; died Vienna, 1787; revolutionised the opera by making the music support the poetry without interrupting the action. Among his best-known works are *Alceste*, *Iphigénie en Aulide*, *Orphée et Eurydice*, *Iphigénie en Tauride*.

Page 111. GUSTAVE CHARPENTIER, born Dieuze, 1860; best known as the composer of the opera *Louise*. In 1900 he founded the *Conservatoire populaire de Mimi Pinson* to give free courses in popular music and classical dancing.

ADRIEN DECOURCELLE, dramatic writer, born Paris, 1812; died Étretat, 1892; wrote the famous drama *Jenny l'Ouvrière*.

LOUIS CHARLES BONAVENTURE ALFRED BRUNEAU, born Paris, 1857; composed a number of operas to libretti by Zola.

LYON'S CHROMATIC HARP, invented by Pleyel, was improved and simplified by Gustave Lyon in 1903.

Les Noces de Jeanette, a light opera composed by Victor Massé in 1853; the libretto is by Barbier and Carré.

La Dame Blanche, a light opera composed by Beieldieu in 1825; the libretto is by Scribe. The quotation, "*Chevalier félons*," etc., is from this work.

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Page 112. *Théâtre-Roulotte*. In 1887 M. Ritt, director of the Opera at Paris, proposed to the Minister of Fine Arts a scheme for the formation of a Popular Theatre, but owing to lack of funds his project was never realised. Adrien Bernheim, born 1861, was General Inspector and Government Commissioner of the subsidised theatres. He founded in 1902 l'Œuvre Française des Trente Ans de Théâtre, which was a fund to help all those directly or indirectly connected with the theatre who after thirty years of work were ill or in want. The fund was formed from the proceeds of a series of dramatic and operatic performances given in the suburban theatres by the companies of the larger subsidised theatres. Bernheim hoped by these means to lay the foundations of a Popular Theatre, as he was convinced it was the most workable form it could take; he considered Catulle Mendès' idea of a *théâtre-roulotte*, or caravan theatre, entirely impracticable. Bernheim's project was in fact recognised in the French Chamber shortly after its inception as the basis of a Popular Theatre.

Page 114. PAUL CLAUDEL, poet and diplomatist, born Villeneuve-sur-Feu, 1868; at present French ambassador at Washington.

Page 127. The *Société des Grandes Auditions Musicales de la France* was founded about twenty-five years ago by the Countess Greffulhe. The moving spirit was Raoul Gunsbourg. Its activities were erratic and ceased to all intents and purposes about 1911.

ALFRED DENIS CORTOT, well-known in America, was born Nyon, Switzerland, 1877; educated at

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the Paris Conservatoire, studied under Decambes, Rouquon, and Diemer, winning the piano prize in 1896, and in that year made his debut at the Colonne concerts. He arranged and produced the first performance in Paris of *Die Götterdämmerung* in 1902. From 1902 to 1911 he was director of the Chorus at Bayreuth.

Page 129. KING LOUIS OF BAVARIA became Wagner's patron in 1864. It was due to him that Wagner became a naturalised Bavarian, and for him that Wagner wrote the *Huldigungsmarsch*.

Page 135. SIEGFRIED WAGNER, born 1871, was the son of Richard Wagner and Cosima, Liszt's daughter, formerly wife of Hans von Bülow.

Page 141. CÉSAR FRANCK, born Liège, 1822, died Paris, 1890; ranked as the greatest of modern French teachers and was probably the greatest of church organists and composers since Bach. Among his best-known works are *Les Béatitudes* and his *Symphony in D*.

Page 147. ALESSANDRO SCARLATTI, born Sicily, 1658 or 1659, died 1725.

Page 148. DOMENICO SCARLATTI, born Naples, 1684, died there 1757.

Page 151. EDOUARD JUDAS COLONNE, born Bordeaux, 1838; died Paris, 1910; ranked with the best of modern conductors. In 1873 he founded the *Con-*

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certs nationaux, which quickly became known as the Concerts Colonne. He once visited America especially to conduct some concerts of the Philharmonic Society of New York.

Page 153. MILY ALEXEIVICH BALAKIREV, born Nijny-Novgorod, 1836; died St. Petersburg, 1910; founded the New Russian School.

NICHOLAS ANDREIEVICH RIMSKY-KORSAKOV, born Tikhvin, Novgorod, 1844, died 1908; his best-known work is *Prince Igor*.

RICHARD NORDRUCK (NORDRAAK), born Christiania, 1842; died 1866; composed incidental music to Björnson's "Mary Stuart"; assisted Grieg in collecting and editing Norwegian folk music.

Page 157. PAUL MARIE THÉODORE VINCENT D'INDY, born Paris, 1851; a pupil of César Franck; among his best-known works are the operas *L'Étranger* and *Fervaal*.

Page 163. SYLVAIN DUPUIS, the Belgian composer, born 1856; conducted the performances of the *Théâtre de la Monnaie* in Brussels and the *Concerts populaires* in the same city from 1900 onwards.

Page 167. ANDRÉ CHARLES PROSPER MESSENGER, born Montluçon, 1853; the composer of the light operas, *Véronique*, *les p'tites Michus*, etc.; was made Artistic Director at Covent Garden for several seasons.

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Page 175. **RAOUL GUNSBURG**, born at Bukarest, 1859; is a literary man, a composer, and Director of the Opera at Monte Carlo. He organised a series of performances of *La Damnation de Faust* adapted for the stage. See note on *La Société des Grandes Auditions Musicales de la France*.

Page 177. **ADOLPHE JULLIEN**, the author of *Hector Berlioz, sa vie et ses œuvres*, illustrated with fourteen original lithogravures by Fantin-Latour, Paris, 1888.

Page 186. *Père la Victoire*, a popular patriotic French air, written in the late 'eighties during the presidency of Sadi Carnot. Its theme was the anticipated reorganisation of the French army by Carnot as it had been reorganised in 1793 by the previous Carnot, called *l'Organisateur de la Victoire*.

Page 188. **GEORGES ALEXANDRE CÉSAR LÉOPOLD BIZET**, born Paris, 1838; died Bougival, near Paris, 1875; among his best-known works are *Carmen* and *l'Arlésienne*.

Page 193. **NICCOLA PICCINI**, born Paris, 1779; died Paris, 1850; rivalled Gluck in popular fame as a composer of operas. The musicians of France were divided into two hostile camps, but the Gluck party carried the day. Piccini's influence on opera is negligible.

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Page 194. GIACOMO PUCCINI, born Lucca, 1858; died 1924; among his best-known works are *Manon Lescaut*, *La Bohème*, *La Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*.

Page 195. GASPARO LUIGI PACIFICO SPONTINI, born Majolati, near Jesi, 1774; died 1851; enjoyed fame as a musician during his lifetime, but failed to create anything of permanent value.

JEAN FRANÇOIS LESUEUR, born Drucat-Plessiel, near Abbéville, 1760; died Paris, 1837; his best-known works are the operas *Télémaque*, *Paul et Virginie*, and *La Caverne*.

ÉTIENNE NICHOLAS HENRI MÉHUL, born Givel, Ardennes, 1763; died Paris, 1817; his *Joseph* and other popular operas were written under the influence of Gluck.

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